THE AMAZING CITY

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To . H. M.

June 1918

THE AMAZING CITY

LA FAISANE
Mais tous ces objets sont pauvres et moroses!

CHANTECLER
Moi, je n'en reviens pas du luxe de ces choses!

LA FAISANE
Tout est toujours pareil, pourtant!

CHANTECLER
Rien n'est pareil,
Jamais, sous le soleil, à cause du soleil!
Car Elle change tout!

LA FAISANE
Elle . . . Qui?

CHANTECLER
La lumière!

. . . .

LA FAISANE
Alors tout le secret de ton chant? . . . . . .

CHANTECLER
C'est que j'ose
Avoir peur que sans moi, l'orient se repose! . . .
Je pense à la lumière et non pas à la gloire.
Chanter, c'est ma façon de me battre et de croire.
Et si de tous les chants le mien est le plus fier,
C'est que je chante clair, afin qu'il fasse clair.

ROSTAND: Chantecler.

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THE AMAZING CITY

BY

JOHN F. MACDONALD

AUTHOR OF
"PARIS OF THE PARISIANS"
"TWO TOWNS—ONE CITY" ETC.

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CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE 7

I. IN THE STREET 19

II. IN A CELLAR 31

III. IN A MARKET-PLACE . . . 38

IV. BOURGEOISIE 47
1. M. DURAND AT MARIE-LE-BOIS
2. PENSION DE FAMILLE. THE BEAUTIFUL MADEMOISELLE MARIE, WHO LOVED GAMBETTA
3. PENSION DE FAMILLE. FRENCH AND PIANO LESSONS. LES SAINTES FILLES, MESDEMOISELLES PÉRIVIER
4. THE AFFAIR OF THE COLLARS

V. ON STRIKE 69
1. WHEN IT WAS DARK IN PARIS
2. BIRDS OF THE STATE AT THE POST OFFICE
3. AFTER THE STORM AT VILLENEUVE-ST-GEORGES

VI. COTTIN & COMPANY . . . 84

VII. THE LATIN QUARTER . . . 92
1. MÈRE CASIMIR
2. GLOOM ON THE RIVE GAUCHE
3. THE DAUGHTER OF THE STUDENTS

VIII. MONSIEUR LE ROUÉ 114

PAGE

IX. FRENCH LIFE AND THE FRENCH STAGE . 122
1. M. PAUL BOURGET, THE REACTIONARY PLAYWRIGHT, AND M. PATAUD, WHO PUT OUT THE LIGHTS OF PARIS
2. M. ALFRED CAPUS. "NOTRE JEUNESSE" AT THE FRANÇAISE
3. M. BRIEUX, "LA DÉSERTEUSE," AT THE ODÉON
4. PARIS, M. EDMOND ROSTAND, AND "CHANTECLER"

X. AFTER "CHANTECLER" . . . 187

XI. AU COURS D'ASSISES. PARIS AND MADAME STEINHEIL 192

XII. THE LATE JULES GUÉRIN AND THE DEFENCE OF FORT CHABROL 216

XIII. DEATH OF HENRI ROCHEFORT . . 235

XIV. ROYAL VISITS TO PARIS . . . 246

XV. AT THE ÉLYSÉE. MESSIEURS LES PRÉSIDENTS 260
1. M. LOUBET AND PAUL DÉROULÈDE
2. M. ARMAND FALLIÈRES. MOROCCO AND THE FLOODS
3. M. RAYMOND POINCARÉ AND THE RECORD OF M. LÉPINE

XVI. MADAME LA PRÉSIDENTE, M. GEORGES CLEMENCEAU AND THE UNFORTUNATE M. PAMS 296

PREFACE

THIS selection from the writings of the late John F. Macdonald—between 1907 and 1913—finds, naturally, and without any arbitrary arrangement, its unity of character, as the middle volume of the book, in three parts, that it was this author's ruling desire—rather than his deliberate and predetermined purpose—to spend many years in writing. The first volume of this book was *Paris of the Parisians*, the last was the posthumous volume recently published, under the title of *Two Towns—One City*. In order to convey a clear idea of the motive and ruling method that give literary and spiritual unity to this long book in three volumes, which stands for the accomplished desire of a brief life, let me quote the author's own account of this desire given in his Preface to *Paris of the Parisians*, where, at twenty years of age, he described himself as "a student of human life, still in his humanities":

"The purpose of these sketches is not political nor yet didactic. No charge is laid upon me to teach the French nation its duties, to reprove it for its follies. Nor yet is it my design to hold up Paris of the Parisians as an example of naughtiness, nor even of virtue, to English readers. A student of human life still in my humanities, my

purpose is purely interpretative. I would endeavour to translate into English some Paris scenes, in such a way as to give a true impression of the movement, personages, sounds, colours and atmosphere pervaded with joy of living which belongs to them. These impressions which I have myself received, and now desire to communicate, are not the result of a general survey of Paris taken from some lofty summit. I have not looked down upon the capital of France from the top of the Eiffel Tower; nor yet from the terrace of the Sacré Cœur; nor yet from the balcony among the *chimères* of Notre Dame; nor yet from Napoleon's column on the Place Vendôme; nor yet from the Revolution's monument that celebrates the taking of the Bastille. No doubt from these exalted places the town affords an amazing spectacle. Domes rise in the distance and steeples. Chimneys smoke; clouds hurry. Up there the spectator has not only a fine bird's-eye view of beautiful Paris: he has a good throne for historical recollections, for philosophical reveries, for the development of political and scientific theories also. But for the student of to-day's life, whose interest turns less to monuments than to men, there is this drawback—seen from this point of view the inhabitants of Paris look pigmies. Far below him they pass and repass: the bourgeois, the bohemian, the boulevardier, all small, all restless, all active, all so remote that one is not to be distinguished from the other. Coming down from his tower the

philosopher may explore Paris from the tombs at St Denis to the crypts of the Panthéon, from the galleries of the Louvre to the shops in the Rue de Rivoli, from the Opera and Odéon to the Moulin Rouge and sham horrors of the cabarets of Montmartre—leaving Paris from the Gare du Nord he may look back at the white city under the blue sky with mingled regret and satisfaction—regret for the instructive days he has spent with her, satisfaction in that he knows her every stone; and yet, when some hours later in mid-Channel the coasts of France grow dim, he may leave behind him an undiscovered Paris—not monumental Paris, not political Paris, not Baedeker's Paris, not profligate Paris, not fashionable cosmopolitan Paris of the Right Bank, not Bohemian Anglo-American Paris of the Left Bank, but Paris as she knows herself—Paris of the Parisians.

"Virtues of which the mere foreign spectator has no notion are to be found in Paris of the Parisians. And the Parisian does not conceal them through *mauvaise honte*. Love of Nature, love of children, both absorb him; how regularly does he hurry into the country to sprawl on the grass, lunch by a lake, stare at the sunset, the stars and the moon; how frequently he admires the view from his window, the Jardin du Luxembourg and the Seine; how invariably he spoils his *gosse* or another's *gosse*, anybody's *gosse*, infant, boy or girl! He will go to the Luxembourg merely to watch them. He likes to see them dig and make queer patterns in the dust. He loves

to hear them laugh at *guignol*, and is officiously careful to see that they are securely strapped on to the wooden horses. He does not mind their hoops, and does not care a jot if their balls knock his best hat off. He walks proudly behind Jeanne and Edouard, on the day of their first Communion, all over Paris; laughing as Jeanne lifts her snow-white skirt and when Edouard, ætat. 10, salutes a friend; and he worships Jeanne, and thinks that there is no better son in the world than Edouard, and he will tell you so candidly and with earnestness over and over again. 'Ma fille Jeanne,' 'Mon fils Edouard,' 'Mes deux gosses,' is his favourite way of introducing the joy of his heart and the light of his home. And then he knows how to live amiably, and how to amuse himself pleasantly, and how to put poorer people at their ease, as on fête days. He will go to a State theatre on 14th July (when the performance is free) and joke with the crowd that waits patiently before its doors, and never push, and never complain, and never think of elbowing his way forward at the critical moment to get in. He will admire the fireworks and illuminations after, and dance at street corners without ever uttering a word that is rude or making a gesture that is rough. He will trifle with confetti on Mardi Gras, and throw coloured rolls of paper on to the boulevard trees. And he will laugh all the time and joke all the time, and make Jeanne happy and Edouard happy, and be happy himself, until it is time to abandon the boulevards and

go home. 'La joie de vivre!' Verily, the Parisian studies, knows and appreciates it.

"There is something else he appreciates also, and reveres. And here especially we find that his paternal affection for all children, his courtesy and good-fellowship with all classes, his sense of proprietorship and delight and pride in public gardens do not indicate only a happy and amiable disposition, but spring from a deeper sentiment. He is sauntering on the boulevards, it may be, with Edouard. The time is summer—there is sunshine everywhere; the trees are in bloom, the streets are full of movement and noise, *fiacres* rattle, tram-horns sound, camelots cry, gamins whistle. Suddenly there is a temporary lull. A slow procession passes, a hearse buried in flowers; mourners on foot follow, the near relatives, bare-headed, walking two by two; after them come, it may be, a long line of carriages; it may be, one forlorn *fiacre*. It does not matter. For the Parisian, a rich funeral or a poor one is never an indifferent spectacle; never simply an unavoidable, disagreeable interruption of traffic, to be got out of sight, and out of the way of the busy world as quickly as possible. Here is one of those ordinary circumstances when the Parisian's attention to the courtesies of social life is the outward and visible sign of his self-respecting humanity and fraternal sympathy. His hat is off, and held off—so is Edouard's cap, so are the caps of even younger children, for from the age of four upwards each *gosse* knows what is due from him on

such an occasion. *Cochers* are bare-headed, boulevard loafers also; the bourgeois stops stirring his absinthe to salute; many a woman crosses herself and mutters a prayer. 'Farewell!' 'God bless thee!' The kind and pious leave-taking of the Parisian enjoying to-day's sunshine to the Parisian of yesterday whose place to-morrow will know him no more, accompanies the procession step by step on its way to the cemetery of Père Lachaise or Montparnasse.

. . . .

"A kind critic of some of these sketches here reproduced from *The Saturday Review* has said of them that their tendency is to 'counteract the wrong-headed reports of French and English antipathies by which two sympathetic neighbour-peoples are being estranged and exasperated.' If this be true—and to some extent I hope it may be—the result is surely all the more gratifying because it does not proceed from any deliberate effort on my part to serve that end, but, as I have said, from my endeavour to convey to others the impressions I have received. The immortal Chadband may be said to have established the proposition that if a householder, having upon his rambles seen an eel, were to return home and say to the wife of his bosom, 'Rejoice with me, I have seen an elephant,' it would not be truth. It would not be truth were I to say of the Jeunesse of the Latin Quarter that it is callous and corrupt, or to deny that beneath the madcap, frolicsome temper of the hour can be felt the justness of mind and

openness to great ideas that will put a curb on extravagance and give safe guidance by and by. And again of Paul and Pierre's little lady friends, Mimi and Musette, mirth-loving, dance-loving daughters of Mürger—it would not be truth were I to report them in any sense wicked girls, or to deny that taking them where they stand their ways of feeling are straight though, no doubt, their way of life may go a little zigzag. And of Montmartre and her cabarets and *chansonniers*—it would not be truth were I to say that only madness and perversion reign in her cabarets, or to deny that true poets and genuine artists may be found amidst the false and hectic glitter of the 'Butte.' And of the man in the street who is neither poet nor student, the average Parisian of simply everyday life—it would not be truth were I to repeat the hackneyed phrase that he would overthrow the Republican Government to reinstate a Monarchy, being a Royalist at heart. True, storms rage about him ; scandals break out beside him ; ministries fall ; presidents pass—did these storms and scandals represent Republican principles it might be said with truth that he paid them little heed. What is true, however, is that the qualities and principles he takes his stand by do not change or fall with ministries or pass with presidents : cultivating still the art of living amiably, rejoicing still over the beauties of his town, and not merely rejoicing over them, but respecting and protecting them, believing still, and with reason, in the greatness of his country, he succeeds

where his rulers often fail, not merely in professing, but in practising the doctrine of liberty, equality, fraternity."

The point of view from which the author of *Paris of the Parisians* in 1900 studied French life remained the same down to 1915, when he died. Nor did he ever change his interpretative methods into didactic or political ones. But it was inevitable that, as years passed, fresh knowledge and enlarged experience would come to the student of French life who, at twenty, sought to convey his impressions as he at that time received them. His impressions were not altered, nor, as a result of his increased knowledge of life, did he ever become himself less appreciative of the special virtues he discovered in the serious, as well as in the joyous, sides of the French art of living. On his own side, he remained to the end of his life (as so many of his friends testify) the same unworldly, joyous being, of profound and tender sympathies, impatient of all rules and systems save those that derive their authority from human kindness. But as a result of his inborn power of vision and gifts of observation and expression, his impressions became more lucid and were given greater force by the exceptional opportunities he enjoyed. During his residence in Paris, throughout the years when most of the essays in criticism contained in this volume were written, he was dramatic critic of French life and the French stage for *The Fortnightly Review*, and as Paris correspondent, given more or less a free

hand by other leading periodicals to which he was a contributor; so that he could direct his attention to the study of many aspects of Parisian life not exclusively bounded by political interests.

Looking through the list of subjects dealt with in these chapters, it will be seen that the criticism of French life carried through by John F. Macdonald (if by "criticism" we understand what Matthew Arnold defined as "an impartial endeavour to see the thing as in itself it really is") covered, from 1907 to 1913, nearly all events in every domain of Parisian life during this critical period.

In other words, the present volume supplies the evidence which not only confirms the impressions that he sought to convey to his fellow-countrymen in *Paris of the Parisians*, but it lends the authority that belongs to a judgment founded upon a right criticism to the sentence which I may, in conclusion, quote from his article on the "Paris of To-day," originally published in *The Fortnightly Review*, July, 1915, and reprinted (by the editor's kind permission) in his posthumous book, *Two Towns—One City*.

"It has been repeatedly and persistently asserted, in hastily written articles and books, that the war has created an entirely 'new' Paris. Journalists and novelists have proclaimed themselves astonished at the 'calm' and the 'seriousness' of the Parisians, and at the 'composed' and 'solemn' aspect of every street, corner and stone in the city; and how elaborately, how melo-

dramatically have they expatiated upon the abolition of absinthe, the closing of night-restaurants, the disappearance of elegant dresses, the silence of the Apaches, the hush in the demi-monde, and the increased congregations in the churches!

"'A new, reformed Paris,' our critics reiterate. 'The flippancy has vanished, the danger of decad ence has passed—and in place of extravagance and hilarity we find economy, earnestness and dignity.'

"Now, with these hastily conceived reflections and criticisms I beg leave to disagree. It is not a 'new' Paris that one beholds to-day, but precisely the very Paris one would expect to see. No city, at heart, is more serious, more earnest, more alive to ideas and ideals: no other capital in the world works so hard, creates so much, feels so deeply, labours and battles so incessantly and so consistently for the supreme cause of liberty, justice and humanity. Crises, and shocks, and scandals, if you like—but what generous reparations, what glorious recoveries! Stifling cabarets, lurid restaurants, rouge, and patchouli, and startling deshabille, if you please; but all those dissipations were provided for the particular pleasure and well-filled purses of Messieurs les Étrangers—at least twenty foreigners to one Frenchman on the hectic hill of Montmartre; and what a babel of English and American voices *chez* Maxim, until five or six in the morning, when the average Parisian was peacefully enjoying his last hour's sleep! The statues and monuments of Paris, the free Sorbonne University, the quays of

the Seine with their bookstalls, the incomparable Comédie Française, the stately French Academy, the Luxembourg Gardens, the Panthéon (with its noble motto: 'Aux Grands Hommes, la Patrie Reconnaissante'), the Arc de Triomphe, Notre-Dame; do these (and innumerable other) illustrious institutions, so cherished by the Parisians, appear compatible with 'flippancy,' 'incoherency' and 'the danger of decadence'? And the profound, ardent patriotism of the Parisians —how else could it have manifested itself save in the noble, supreme spectacle of courage, determination and self-sacrifice which we are witnessing to-day? No; it is not a 'new' Paris, but the very Paris one expected to see; hushed but proud; stricken yet self-confident; wounded, even stabbed to the heart after eleven months of war —but heroic, indomitable"—the Amazing City—the worthy capital of, as Mr Kipling says,

"the Land beloved by every soul that loves and serves its kind."

Before closing my preface to this Selection from the sketches, essays and criticisms of Paris life, under its picturesque, popular, literary and social aspects that represents John F. Macdonald's interpretation of the spirit of the "Amazing City," between 1907 and 1914, I have to acknowledge the kindness of the several Editors, to whom these different articles were originally addressed; and who have allowed me to reprint them in the present volume. *The Roué*, *In a Cellar*, and *The Affair of the Collars*, appeared originally in *The Morning Post*. The three articles, *On Strike*, the

two pictures of the historical *Pension de Famille in the Rue des Poitevins* (haunted by the memory of Gambetta), and of the other *Pension de Famille in the Shadow of St Sulpice*, saddened by the memory of the pathetic story of the gentle and pious old maids who died broken-hearted, as victims of the Rochette swindle, appeared in *The Morning Leader*, in the days before its association with *The Daily News*. The series of short sketches of French Presidents and Leading Statesmen, and Personalities, who have helped to make, and are still living influences in, French politics, were contributed, later, to *The Daily News and Morning Leader*. I have to thank the Editor of *The Contemporary Review* for consenting to the reprinting of the articles upon *Henri Rochefort* and *Royal Visits to Paris*; and the Editor of *The Fortnightly Review* for allowing me to reproduce from the series of articles on *French Life and the French Stage*, which appeared in this *Review* during several years, three special criticisms, illustrative of the typical French national "virtue,"—a fundamental understanding of the essential duty of man to be an intelligent and kindly human being—applied to the correction and sweetening of faulty rules of "Bohemian" morality and bourgeois respectability; and lending high ideals to what is generally described as the "realistic" spirit of the modern French drama. The articles descriptive of life in the Latin Quarter appeared originally in *The Saturday Review*.

FREDERIKA MACDONALD.

February 1918.

I

IN THE STREET

IN my almost daily perambulations through the brilliant, through the drab, and through the ambiguous quarters of Paris, I constantly come upon street scenes that bring me inquisitively to a standstill. Not that they are particularly novel or startling. Indeed, to the Parisian they are such banal, everyday spectacles that he passes them by without so much as a glance. But for me, familiar though I am with the physiognomy of the Amazing City, these street scenes, amusing or pathetic, sentimental or grim, possess an indefinable, a never-failing charm.

For instance, I dote on a certain ragged, weather-beaten old fellow who is always and always to be discovered, on a boulevard bench, under a dim gas-lamp, at the precise hour of eleven. Across his knees—unfolded—a newspaper. And spread forth on the newspaper, scores and scores of cigarette ends and cigar stumps, which have been industriously amassed in the streets, and on the terraces of cafés, during the day. Every night, on this same boulevard bench, at the same hour of eleven, the old fellow counteth up his spoil.

"Fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven," he mutters.

"Eh bien, le vieux, how are affairs?" asks a

policeman. But the old fellow, bent in half over the newspaper, hears him not. When—O joy!—he comes upon a particularly fine bit of cigar, he holds it up to the gas-lamp, measures it closely with his eye, then packs it carefully away in his waistcoat pocket. But when—O gloom!—he has a long run of bad luck in the way of wretched, almost tobaccoless cigarette ends, he breaks out into guttural expressions of indignation and disgust.

The night wears on. Up go the shutters of the little wine-shop opposite. Rarely a passer-by. Scarcely a sound.

"One hundred and two. One hundred and three. One hundred and four," counts the weather-beaten old fellow under the gas-lamp.

Then, the street singers of Paris, with harmonium, violin and a bundle of tender, sentimental songs. Four of them, as a rule; four men in jerseys, scarlet waistbands and blue corduroy trousers. They, too, come out particularly at night and establish themselves under a gas-lamp. And all around them stand charming, bareheaded girls from the neighbouring *blanchisseries* and milliners' shops; and the adorers of those maidens—young, amorous MM. Georges, Ernest and Henri—from the grocer's, the butcher's, the printer's; and workmen and charwomen and concierges; and probably a cabman or two, and most likely a soldier, a lamp-lighter, a policeman.

"*Love is Always in Season*, the latest and greatest of valse-songs, created by the incomparable

Mayol," announces the vocalist. A chord from the harmonium and violin, and the singer, in a not unmelodious voice, proceeds to assure us that "though the snow may fall, or the skies may frown, or the seas may roar, Love, sweet love, is Always in Season."

General applause. Cries of "C'est chic, ça" from the charming, bareheaded girls. Sighs and sentimental glances from their faithful adorers.

"Buy *Love is Always in Season.* Only two sous, only two sous! The Greatest, the most Exquisite valse-song of the day," cries the vocalist, holding up copies of the song. "Buy it at once, and we will sing it all together."

At least twenty copies are sold. "Attention," cries the vocalist. And then, under the gas-lamp, what a spectacle and what song! Everyone sings; yes, even this huge, apoplectic cabman: "Though the snow may fall . . ." Everyone sings: the soldier, the workmen, the decrepit old charwomen: "Though the skies may frown . . ." Everyone sings: the very policeman's lips are moving. And how the charming, bareheaded girls sing and sing; and how amorously, how passionately do their adorers raise their voices: "Though the seas may roar . . . What matter, what matter! . . . Since love, sweet love, is always in season!"

Of course children, with their lively, irresponsible games, provide delightful street scenes. No piano-organs, alas! to which they may dance. We have but three or four piano-organs in Paris,

and these play only in elegant quarters, for the pleasure of portly, solemn butlers. However, the children hold theatrical performances on the pavement, which, if animated and dramatic, are scarcely convincing; indeed they must be pronounced bewildering, chaotic. René, aged six, proclaims himself Napoleon; Jeanne, his sister, declares herself Sarah Bernhardt; André strangely states that he is an Aeroplane; others most incoherently become a Horse, the President of the Republic, Aunt Berthe, a Steamer on the Seine, the Dog at the neighbouring chemist's, and (this, a favourite, amazing rôle) the Eiffel Tower! Then, when the parts have been duly selected, after no end of wrangling, then, the play! Much extraordinary dialogue between Napoleon and the divine Sarah; more between the Eiffel Tower and the President of the Republic; still more between the Aeroplane, the Seine Steamer and Aunt Berthe. And then dancing and singing and skipping and——

Well, at once the most irresponsible and irresistible street scene in Paris. Or, at least, second only in irresponsibility to the fêtes of Mardi Gras and Mi-Carême.

Year after year, the cynic is to be heard declaring that confetti has "gone out" and that no one really rejoices at carnival time; but year after year, when Mardi Gras and Mi-Carême come round, confetti flies swiftly and thickly and gaily in Paris, and only a rare, elegant boulevardier, or some dull, heavy bour-

geois remains indifferent to the excitement of the scene.

Confetti, in fact, everywhere! Already at nine o'clock this morning—blithe morning of Mardi Gras—it has got on to my staircase, and from thence into the dining-room and on to the breakfast-table. Suddenly, confetti in my coffee. A moment later, confetti on the butter. And when I unfold the newspapers, a shower of confetti.

" It is extraordinary," I murmur to the servant.

" Most certainly, confetti is extraordinary," she assents. " It goes where it pleases; it does what it likes; it respects nobody and nothing—impossible to stop it."

" And only nine o'clock in the morning," I remark, removing a new speck of confetti from the butter.

" At seven o'clock, when I went to Mass, it had got into the church," relates my servant. " It was also in the sacristy when I went to see M. le Curé. Truly, it is the most astonishing thing in the world; and yet it is only a little bit of coloured paper."

As time wears on the tradesmen's assistants bring more confetti into the house. Somehow or other it enters my boots, and finds a resting-place in my pockets. At luncheon, lots of confetti. At dinner, pink, green, yellow, orange and purple confetti with every course. And when at eight o'clock I set forth to view the rejoicings on the Grands Boulevards, my servant, leaning over the banisters, impudently pelts me with confetti.

A cold night and occasionally a shower—but the boulevards are thronged with I don't know how many thousands of Parisians. Here, there and everywhere electrical advertising signs dance and blink dizzily. Each café is brilliantly illuminated. More pale, fierce light from the street lamps. And, heavens! what a din of voices, and whistles, and musical instruments!

"Who is without confetti? Who is without confetti?" shout scores of men, women and children, holding up long, bulky paper bags, supposed to contain two pounds of the bright-coloured stuff. And the bags sell and sell. And the little rounds of paper fly and fly. And down they fall in their hundreds of thousands on to the ground, making it a soft, agreeable carpet of confetti.

Of course, no traffic. In the midst of the crowd groups of policemen; and the policemen are pelted, and the policemen must shake confetti out of eyes, and beards, and ears, and moustaches. However, they are amiable; and, indeed, everyone is good-tempered. No rudeness and no roughness. Here is Edouard, aged eight, in the crowd—dressed as a soldier, with a wooden gun and a paper helmet. There is Yvonne, aged seven, in the throng—all in white, with a wand tied at the top with a huge creamy bow. And Edouard and Yvonne are perfectly safe. And that old married couple —plainly from the provinces—are entirely safe. And——

A splash of confetti in my face. Then, a deluge of confetti over my hat. And I am pleased, and

I am flattered; for my assailant is an English girl, with blue eyes, and gold hair, and an incomparable complexion.

Despite the cold, every seat and every table on the terraces of the cafés are occupied. Past the terraces surges the crowd, casting confetti at the glasses of beer, coffee and liqueurs, which the consumers have carefully covered over with saucers. But, always unconquerable, the confetti enters the glasses; and thus one drinketh benedictine *à la* confetti, and chartreuse *à la* confetti, and——

"Who wants a nose? Who wants a nose?" shouts a hawker, holding up a collection of long, vivid red noses. And the red noses are bought; and so, too, are false beards and moustaches, and artificial eyebrows, and huge cardboard ears.

Then, what costumes in the crowd! Of course, any number of pierrots and clowns, who gesticulate and grimace; and ladies in dominoes, and men in heavy scarlet mantles and black masks. Over there, an Arab; here, a Greek soldier in the Albanian kilt—the picturesque "fustanella." And confetti—red, blue, yellow, green, white, orange, purple—sprinkled over, and clinging to, all these different costumes, and flying above them and all around them, a fantastic spectacle!

Confetti, again, in the fur coats of chauffeurs; a whirl of it—bright yellow—around three colossal negroes from darkest Africa; and a fierce battle of it, waged by an admiring Parisian against two fascinating young ladies from New York. Darkest Africa grins, displaying glistening white teeth.

New York utters shrill little cries. And Motordom—represented by the three chauffeurs—imitates the many savage sounds emitted by 60-horse-power machines.

"Your health!" cries a clown, plunging a handful of confetti into a glass which, for only a second or two, has remained uncovered.

"Vive la Vie! Vive la Vie!" shout a procession of students from the Latin Quarter.

"Who is without confetti? Who wants a nose? Who desires a moustache?" yell the hawkers.

And now, rain. Down it comes, finely, steadily, soddening the carpet of confetti, spotting the fantastic costumes, scattering the crowd. Edouard (in his paper helmet) and Yvonne (with her wand) are hurried along homewards—much against their will—by their parents; the hawkers disappear with the remaining paper bags; the dizzy advertising signs give a last blink and go out; the policemen congregate beneath the street lamps and in doorways—the carnival is over.

However, memories remain, and these memories are—confetti.

It has flown, but it has not gone. Every hour of every day, for many a week, it will turn up in one's home, in one's clothing, at one's meals . . . still bold, vivid, ungovernable, unconquerable.

. . . .

And now, after colour and gaiety—ambiguity, gloom. Away to remote, neglected corners of Paris; to the *terrain vague*—the waste ground

—of the Amazing City, which, this particular afternoon, lies steeped in a damp fog, and strewn with sodden newspapers and broken bottles, and pots and pans without handles, hats without brims, and battered old shoes. On the waste, prowling about amidst the wreckage, a gaunt, vagabond cat. Gathering together odds and ends, the aged, bent *chiffonnière*—a hag of a woman, half demented, with fingers like claws, that go scraping and digging about in the refuse. Then three ragged children—skeletons almost—also interested in the rubbish, who are savagely snarled at by the *chiffonnière* when they approach her preserves. Fog, damp and puddles. Mounds of overturned earth, subsidences, crevices. A rusty engine lying disabled on its side. Quantities of coarse, savage thistles. Gloom unrelieved. The *chiffonnière* and the ragged children becoming more and more ghostly and ghastly in the half-light. The kind of scene depicted so tragically by the great-hearted Steinlen, and sung of so despairingly by the humane poet, Rictus. Sung of, too, by lesser poets than the author of the *Soliloque d'un Pauvre*. For *terrain vague* is a favourite theme with the *chansonniers* of Montmartre, and in their songs they are fond of describing how they have passed from comfortable, bourgeois neighbourhoods on to "waste ground." The bourgeois was dozing in his chair; Madame la Bourgeoise was knitting a hideous woollen shawl; Mademoiselles the three daughters were respectively tinkling away at the piano,

pasting picture cards into an album, absorbing a sickly novel. As a heartrending, an overwhelming contrast, behold—after the snugness of the bourgeoisie—the wretchedness, the *misère noire* of the human phantoms poking about on the waste ground!

"Would that I had a bourgeois here on this *terrain vague*; a bourgeois I might terrify and harrow!" declaim the realistic *chansonniers* of the Montmartre cabarets. "'Bourgeois,' I would cry, 'what do you see? Bourgeois, look well, look again, look always. Bourgeois, do you understand? It is well, wretched, cowardly Bourgeois—you tremble!'"

No less attracted by *terrain vague* are the frail, wistful poets of Paris, the poets (as they have been so admirably denominated) of "mists and half-moons, dead leaves and lost illusions." On to the waste they bring Pierrot, their favourite, eternal hero. Midnight has long struck. A half-moon casts silvery shafts on to the wreckage—and on to Pierrot, who, as he stands there forlornly amidst the debris, proceeds to disclose the secret: "Pourquoi sont pâles les Pierrots. . . ." Only the cheeks of the vulgar are rosy; for the vulgar cannot feel. But the artist is stung day after day by ironies, cruelties, bitter awakenings—and so is frail, and so is pale. How he suffers, how tragically is he disillusioned! There was a blonde . . . but she was capricious. There was a brune . . . but she, too, was fickle. There was a rousse, an auburn-haired goddess . . . but

alas! she also was false. And Pierrot sobs. And Pierrot goes on his knees to the half-moon. And Pierrot prays. And suddenly a radiant figure appears on the waste ground, and a sweet, melodious voice murmurs: "Why sigh for the blonde? Why grieve for the brune? Why weep for the rousse? Am I not enough?" And Pierrot, looking up with his pale, tear-stained face, beholds his Muse, smiling down upon him—

"Sur ce terrain va—aa—gue."

Farther away—away, this time, to one of the environs of Paris, and down there, by the riverside, the annual fête. Not an empty corner, not a vacant space; nothing but booths, "side-shows," shooting-galleries, roundabouts, caravans —"all the fun of the fair." Confusion, exhilaration, and a hundred different, frenzied sounds. All this babel lasts a week; but at the end of the week, departure and gloom. Gone the caravans and their picturesque inmates. Gone the "distractions." There stood the shooting - gallery, with its targets, grotesque dummies and strings of clay pipes. One fired twice for a penny. If successful, one was rewarded with paper flowers, or a shocking cigar, or (in exceptional cases) a strident alarm clock; if a bad marksman, one was consoled with a slice of hard, gritty gingerbread. Farther on revolved the roundabout. One rode a rickety steed, with only one stirrup. One turned to the accompaniment of a husky, exhausted old organ. What appalling liberties it

took with the *Valse Bleue*! Next, one visited the palmist, inspected a seedy lion, stared at optical illusions, shook hands with a dwarf, bought sticks of nougat, rode again on the round about, returned to——

But all over now, and nothing but memories and souvenirs about: broken clay pipes, splinters of bottles and wood, shavings, scraps of cloth, hand-bills and rusty, bent nails, the eternal old battered hat, the equally inevitable old boot, and a hoof or two from the rickety horses that revolved to the haunting tune of the *Valse Bleue*.

The usual mounds of refuse. Also, the turf damaged with ruts, and burnt away in places by the fair people's fires. The annual fête over, not a soul but myself loiters on this portion of the Seine river-bank. Only gloom and desolation. Nothing but waste. Again, *terrain vague*.

II

IN A CELLAR

BRIGHT things and sombre things, tarnished things and threadbare things, frail things, fast-fading things; things and things, and all of them old things. . . . The past in this cellar; in every nook and corner of it—the past. Come here through a hole in the wall of a narrow, cobbled Paris street—come down a number of crooked stone steps—I now look curiously about me, and wonder what to do next. No one challenges me: the cellar appears to be uninhabited. Yet above its crude, primitive entrance, on a weather-beaten board, I discern the name—Veuve Mollard.

An autumnal mist filled the street outside; and the mist, pouring through the hole in the wall, has invaded the cellar and made it chilly and ghostly. It is a rambling, chaotic place—suggestive of three or four cellars having been thrown into one; for it twists and it turns, and it bulges and recedes, and it slopes and ascends; and the grimy brick ceiling—lofty enough at the entrance—suddenly dips towards the middle, and almost precipitates itself to the ground at the far end. Here and there an unshaded lamp, of the kitchen description, burns dimly. On a stool I perceive

a workbox, crowded with sewing materials—but not a sign, not a sound of "Widow" Mollard. I cough loudly. I advance farther into the cellar. And, as I advance, I pass bright things and sombre things, tarnished things and threadbare things, frail things, fast-fading——

"Monsieur?"

An apparition, a spectre! There, in the background, appears a tall, gaunt woman, with a pale, wrinkled face, large, luminous dark eyes and tumbled white hair. In the dim light from the lamps Veuve Mollard looks a hundred years old. There she stands, old and alone, in a rambling old cellar, amidst old, discarded things.

"Monsieur?"

A deep, even a sepulchral voice—and then from myself an explanation. I should like to examine the old things—all of them, not knowing myself what I want. I have a fancy for old things; like to wonder over them; like, O most respectfully, to handle them. No; unnecessary to turn up the lamps; they give, just as they are, the very light for old things. "Faîtes donc, faîtes donc," assents the deep voice. Retiring to a corner, Widow Mollard seats herself on a stool and proceeds to darn a rent in a faded yellow velvet curtain.

Silence in the cellar. Shadows, ambiguities, and the mist from the street.

Against the walls, boards have been laid on the floor; and heaped on the boards are tapestries, draperies, all kinds of stuffs. Then, tables, wooden

trays, and flat, open receptacles of wicker-work. Also pegs, for gowns. Again, battered, lidless boxes of odds and ends. Thus, *embarras de choix*: which of the old things shall I examine first? At last I decide on the tapestries. They are of all shapes and sizes, but most of them have been severed, are but parts—no head to this horse, no top to the lance of this knight, and of that saint only the half. Next, a circular piece of tapestry representing what might be a throne—but faded, faded; and the figure on the throne as shadowy as a phantom. Gobelins? Veuve Mollard no doubt knows: but I prefer to pursue my researches alone, unaided; and then the gaunt widow is darning and darning away at the yellow velvet curtain. . . . Whose velvet curtain? Where has it hung, what fine window has it screened? Once, evidently, a rich, magnificent yellow; now faded, crumpled, damaged. A curtain from the Faubourg St Germain? from a ruined château? even from the palaces of Versailles or Fontainebleau? Again I glance at Widow Mollard. Old, old. Her fingers tremble, and a long lock of white hair has fallen over one pale, wrinkled cheek.

Out of this tray a snuff-box, enamelled, oval-shaped and delicate. A Watteau peasant girl on the lid—but the pretty, pink-checked girl, fast fading. Whose snuff-box? Then a shoe buckle. Whose massive, old-fashioned silver buckle? And of whom this miniature: blue eyes, sensitive mouth, delicate eyebrows and powdered hair?

Then, a tiny Sèvres tea-cup; a gilt key; a chased silver book-clasp; a string of coral; an ornament of amethysts; bits of embroidery; stray pieces of velvet and silk; lace, satins, furs, and spangled and soft and transparent stuffs. Whose finery? Perhaps a débutante's, a débutante of years ago —now old, like the things.

Graceful, charming débutante of the past! Behold her dressing—or rather being dressed—for her first, her very first ball, amidst what excitement, what confusion! Her mother on her knees, the maids also on their knees, putting the last touches; and the débutante turned round and round, and exhorted to keep still, and told to walk a little, and ordered to return, and commanded to remain "there," and not to move, not to move! Radiant, irresistible débutante of long ago. At once dignified and shy, now flushed and now pale when in the ballroom she made her first bow to the world, received her first compliments, achieved her first triumphs, and experienced, no doubt, her first emotions, her first illusions, her first doubts. Here in this cellar, in the half-light and the mist from the street, here lies her first ball-dress; and here too, perhaps, are the shoes in which she danced her first official waltz, her first real *cotillon* —a pair of small satin shoes which repose on the top of a heap of other frail shoes.

Long, narrow shoes, tiny ridiculous shoes—some of them with loose, dangling rosettes, others showing a bare place where the rosette or a jewel had once been fastened. High heels, and the soles

scarcely thicker than a sheet of paper. Sometimes a rent in the satin, and the maker's name stamped in dim gilt letters. Shoes, no doubt, that long ago stepped daring quadrilles at the *bal masqués* of the Opera ; the shoes of Mademoiselle Liane de Luneville, a former blonde and brilliant courtesan ; and next to them remnants from Mademoiselle de Luneville's wardrobe. A white satin dress, sewn with artificial pearls, dismembered silken sleeves, spangled stuffs, daring gauzes, and other extravagances and audacities. Courtesan finery. Sold, no doubt, in the twilight of the *demi-mondaine's* career ; or seized roughly by the bailiffs when not a shadow of the beauty or glory of Mademoiselle de Luneville remained.

Now does a moth fly out of a piece of tapestry I have shaken. Now do I behold a black cat, with lurid yellow eyes, perched motionless upon a pile of draperies in a corner. Now do I perceive gigantic cobwebs overhead. Thus, some life—but life of an eerie nature—in the cellar.

" Je ne vous dérange pas, Madame ? "

" Faîtes donc, faîtes donc," replies the deep, sepulchral voice of Veuve Mollard.

A cracked water-colour landscape signed, ever so faintly, " R. E. F." Disposed of, perhaps, for a five-franc piece ; and to-day the painter either dead, or a shabby, lonely, struggling old fellow ? or a rich and distinguished " master " ? A sword—used in a duel ? A small silver mug—from a godfather ? Pink, white and black dominoes : they should have been placed amongst the courtesan's

finery. The *bâton* of a *chef d'orchestre,* silver-mounted, of ebony. A bunch of tarnished seals; chipped vases and liqueur glasses; a cracked, frameless mirror; a collection of old legal and medical books; a heap of dusty, fantastic draperies of the kind used extensively by the students of the Latin Quarter. Deceptive draperies that once turned a bed into a divan, discreet draperies that hid the scars on the walls —the draperies of Paul and Pierre, of Gaston and René, sons of Henri Mürger, genuine, veritable Bohemians, who, if they lived recklessly and irresponsibly, were nevertheless full of generous impulses, imagination, ideals, but who to-day are become stout, bourgeois, double-chinned inhabitants of such dreary provincial towns as Abbeville and Arras.

Thus the past in this cellar; in every nook and corner of this rambling, chaotic cellar, the past. Changes and changes—but not one change for the better. All around me evidence of somebody's indifference and faithlessness to old possessions. On all sides, symbols of somebody's downfall and ruin.

"Je vous remercie, Madame."

"C'est moi qui vous remercie, Monsieur."

On my way out—on the crooked stone staircase leading upwards to the hole in the wall—I look back.

And down there, in the dim light from the lamps, the gaunt, white-haired woman darns away at the faded velvet curtain. Down there,

from its throne of draperies, the black cat watches the widow with lurid yellow eyes. Down there in vague disorder—in an atmosphere of shadows and ambiguities, of moth, cobweb and mist—down there, lie bright things and sombre things, tarnished things and threadbare things, frail things, fast-fading things; things and things, and all of them old, discarded, forgotten things.

III

IN A MARKET-PLACE

THE market! . . . We holiday-keepers in Moret-sur-Loing have been looking forward to it, imagining it, scanning the spot where it is held, recalling other French market-places, ever since we first bowed before the amiable *patron* and *patronne* of our hotel. Our immediate inquiry was when is the market. "Tell us," we cried, "when we, like the villagers, may go forth in our newest clothes, in high spirits, as though to some fine ceremony, to view fruits and vegetables, gigots and *rôtis* if we like, stalls of chiffons and trinkets, patent medicines, soaps, scents and——"

"A week hence, mon pauvre Monsieur," interrupted the *patronne*. "The market takes place on Tuesdays only: as it is Tuesday night, you have just missed it."

"Then," we replied, "the week will be empty, sombre; the week will be a year, a century; but for you, Madame, and your admirable hotel, the week would be intolerable." And the *patronne* bowed and smiled; we bowed and smiled, "comme dans le monde," in fact, "en mondains." Never was there sweeter smiling, better bowing, in Moret. . . .

Moret at the Market.—The time of day differs

in Moret-sur-Loing; differs, also, in neighbouring villages. For miles around, the clocks strike independently, instead of in chorus, so that it is ten at the station, when it is ten minutes to, in our hotel; a quarter to ten, inside the local *bijoutier's*—but all hours within. When these clocks have done striking, the church clock starts; there is no corroboration, no unanimity. However . . . who cares, who worries? It is "almost" eleven; "about" twelve; a "little past" four; that suffices. We are late, or we are early. We get accustomed to being strangely in three places at the very same hour. Should a friend be pressed we can say: "That clock is fast"; if he weary us, we need not hesitate to declare it slow. And watches vary; time is of no moment, in Moret. Farther still from Fontainebleau, in the village of Grez, the two or three hundred inhabitants rely chiefly on the Curé for the hour. He alone controls the church clock; but he, an irascible old gentleman, often quarrels with the Mayor: and on these occasions stops the clock immediately, revengefully. Once the quarrel lasted three whole months: for three whole months the hands of the clock remained stationary. The Mayor protested: but the Curé ignored him. When at last the Mayor withdrew his objection to the point at issue, the Curé allowed the clock to go again. And now, if ever the Mayor and the Curé disagree, the Curé stops the clock, the Mayor protests, the Curé ignores him: and Grez has no church clock to tell the time until the unhappy Mayor gives in.

Fortunately for us in Moret, the Mayor and Curé are friends. We depend more or less on the Curé's clock—most dilapidated of dials—whose solemn summons at ten on Sunday bids us attend High Mass; whose brisker chimes at the same hour on Tuesday set us hastening towards the market. Indeed, in our hotel, disdainful of its dubious timepiece, we wait for the ten strokes and after counting them join the villagers outside: knots of villagers, rows of villagers, solitary villagers, but all of them fresh, immaculate. Each woman wears a print dress, or a print skirt and camisole, a spotted handkerchief tied in a knot at the top of her head. Each man has drawn on a clean cotton shirt and his newest coat, or a blouse; his tie invariably is bright. Each girl is clad lightly, charmingly, and has becomingly arranged her hair. As for us . . . well, we do not seem shabby beside a painter, a Parisian in "le boating" costume: our scarf is as silken as theirs, our waistcoat is equally white and *piqué*, but our cane is undoubtedly handsomer, and we think we dangle it more elegantly.

Over the cobble-stones, avoiding the *ruisseau*, we go — smoking and chatting — the peasants swinging their baskets, the girls giving a last touch to their hair—an amazing spectacle.

At the end of the narrow street—the "Grande Rue," no less!—is installed the first market-woman, with a vast basket of vegetables. And she, a wizened old thing, wrinkled and bent in half, appears to be reflecting over her poor

potatoes, her shabby cauliflowers. Still, she refuses to bargain. She has but one price, and she sniffs when a would-be customer turns over her wares, inspecting them; and sniffs again when she is told that they are "bien médiocres et bien chères." So she sells nothing: falls into reflection again, quite forgets the would-be customer, who, turning up the next street, faces a double row of market-people established on either kerbstone, and thus comes upon the chiefest commerce.

All Moret is present, all Moret is bargaining and buying, and all the market-people are seamed with wrinkles, browned, bent; and all of them wear blouses or camisoles or print dresses, handkerchiefs or peaked caps—old, old people all of them; at all events seemingly old; weather-beaten, of the earth. Each has his or her basket, so that there are two uninterrupted lines of baskets, of little piles of paper, of measuring utensils. Every vegetable is available, every fruit. There is crying, croaking, quarrelling; there is laughter, the chink of sous. Above the din one hears:

"Trois sous, Madame."

"Non, Madame, deux sous."

And: "Regardez ces raisins."

"Voyez, voyez, les melons."

And always: "Cinq sous, Madame."

"Non, Madame, trois sous. . . . Sous, sous, sous."

Slowly we progress, meet the *patronne* of our hotel, the postman, the *garde champêtre*, the barber

and, all of a sudden, a bevy of fair Americans, daintily dressed, who inhabit a "finishing" school near by. In the village it is hinted that they are heiresses, all of them. Certainly their clothes are rich, but they carry paper bags of grapes, and eat the grapes, and dawdle . . . just like Mesdemoiselles Jeanne and Marie, village girls who "do washing" on the river bank every other day of the week. Also, they utter little cries:

"Isn't that old woman the funniest thing that's ever happened!"

And: "My! Isn't it all too quaint!"

Here a foreigner sketches. Farther on, by the side of the church, a painter has established his easel; next him, stands a group of village women who have already done their shopping and bear their spoil. And they compare their purchases, gesticulating over this cauliflower, that salad; and soon we hear much about a certain Madame Morin who has gone home furious because Madame Petilleau carried off an amazing melon she had her eye on . . . just by a minute. But Madame Morin is always like that; Madame Morin would flush, lose her temper, over a single bean.

Now stalls rise—stalls of ribbons and jewellery, stalls of cheeses, stalls of sheets, curtains, all stuffs. And the stuffs are held up to the sun and considered in the shade, and compared with a complexion and wound round a waist, so that we hear:

"Ça vous va bien."

And: "Je trouve que c'est trop claire."

And, of course: "Trois francs, Madame."

"No, Madame, deux francs . . . francs, francs, francs."

Baskets become veritable burdens. Gesticulations grow wilder, the cries louder, the exchange of francs and sous quicker and quicker. Everyone has vegetables and fruits; many have coloured stuffs.

To and fro go the *patronne* of our hotel, the postman, the *garde champêtre*, the barber, the Americans. To and fro go the village girls—but pause all at once before a ragged fellow whose eyes are crossed, whose face is unshaven, whose dirty hands clasp an accordion. The church clock strikes eleven. But above all these sounds rises suddenly and discordantly the voice of the man with the accordion. As he sings he leers. The village girls titter. To them, impudently and grotesquely, he addresses his eternal refrain:

"Tu sais bien que je t'ai-ai-me."

Still we linger; soon we admire a group of women and children whose home is on the barges of the river bank. Barefoot, with shining black eyes and black hair, bright shawls and handkerchiefs, they add to the picturesqueness of the spectacle as they wander to and fro with wickerwork wares. A graceful English girl presents the children with grapes, and the children smile, displaying the whitest teeth. The women pounce upon stray slips of salad, broken atoms of

cauliflower, and are watched suspiciously by the market-people. The foreigner sketches them; the painter evidently intends to include them in his scene—and we, also fascinated, would follow them, were we not tempted to listen to a noisy fellow who, flourishing a scrap of soap, boasts that it will blot out every stain.

How simple, how easy is it to stain your coat, he cries; then proceeds to point out stains on various coats. Fear not, however. Be not cast down. *He* is here, he, the enemy of stains—*he* with "The Miraculous Tablet."

And the "Miraculous Tablet" is held on high and flourished to and fro, ready to render old clothes new, and soiled hats fresh, in exchange for two vulgar sous.

"Seize this surprising opportunity," shouts the man. "Take out your stains, all of you. The Miraculous Tablet will away with them all . . . except stains on your conscience. I swear it, and I am honest."

And then, continuing, he announces that the "Miraculous Tablet" has made him famous throughout the land; that clients return to him in thousands to express their gratitude; that a certain mother once shed tears of joy when he took an ink-stain out of her little boy's white suit; that only yesterday, in Orleans, the inhabitants cheered and cheered him and, rushing forward, begged leave to shake his hand. "And," he concludes, "believe me, ladies and gentlemen, I had not hands enough."

Suddenly a tambourine sounds, and up the street come a man and a woman with a dancing bear, another woman with a monkey. The monkey screams, the bear on its hind legs bobs up and down, up and down, and the man encourages him gruffly and the woman shakes the tambourine.

Of course a crowd assembles, and of course cries go up. Cries rise everywhere: from the market-place, from the crowd, from the enemy of stains, from the man with the accordion, from the group around the bear; all cries, the strangest cries, all languages also—English, French, many a patois, "bargee," the unknown tongue of the almost black people with the bear—and all accents.

Then several nuns issue forth from church and pause for a moment. The Curé appears. A "Savoyard" with statues—as white as his statues, for his clothes are white and his face is covered with chalk-dust — approaches. And all these different people, in all their different costumes, with different accents and different gestures, mingle together, elbow one another, and all around them are the stalls of bright stuffs, the vast baskets of vegetables and fresh fruits. In the background—grey and quaint—stands the church.

However, time is flying and luncheon hour is near. The purchases have to be borne home, washed, prepared, and so the inhabitants of Moret raise their baskets, exchange adieux. Off starts the *patronne* of our hotel; off go the postman, the

garde champêtre, the barber and the fair Americans —still eating grapes—to their "finishing" school. The village girls disperse, and here and there the market-people are already dislodging their baskets, counting up sous. Once again we hear of the hot-tempered Madame Morin, the triumphant Madame Petilleau. Other familiar sounds reach us as we near the end of the street: "This, then, is the Miraculous Tablet . . . and only yesterday in Orleans . . ." and for the last time, "Cinq sous, Madame," "Non, Madame, trois sous," and the hour being told by the church.

In the far distance, the bear is evidently dancing, for we faintly hear the tambourine. But his audience must now be small: before us, up the Grande Rue, moves a slow procession of men and women with baskets, sometimes two baskets to each person.

Still, the first market-woman does not appear to have provided them with their spoil. She alone has done no business, and sits, wizened and bent in half, over her shabby cauliflowers, her poor potatoes. Occasionally she sniffs.

But her sniff develops into a snort, when the cross-eyed, unshaven fellow with the accordion slouches up and, pausing for a moment, winks . . . a fearful wink . . . leers, addresses her impudently and grotesquely with his eternal refrain:

"Tu sais bien que je t'ai-ai-me."

IV

BOURGEOISIE

1. M. Durand at Marie-le-Bois

A FRENCH friend, M. Durand, thus writes to me:

"To-morrow morning at 11.47 my wife, myself, the three children and our deaf old servant Amélie, all leave for Marie-le-Bois; and to-morrow night, whilst you, *mon cher ami*, are eating the rosbif and drinking the pale ale of *la vieille Angleterre*, the Durand family will be dining off radishes, sardines, chicken, and cool salad, in the garden of the Villa des Roses.

"I have taken the villa for a month—our holiday. The Duvals and the Duponts occupy villas near by; and we shall play croquet together, and be amiable and happy. I, your stout friend, *le gros* Durand, will wear white shoes and no waistcoat, and I shall also smoke many pipes and enjoy long siestas under my own tree." (What an idyllic picture—the large citizen Durand asleep in a vast cane chair, under a tree!)

"But to-day, *mon vieux*, what anxiety, what chaos, what despair, in our Paris home! We are distracted, we are in peril of losing our reason, so terrible, so sinister is the work of moving to Marie-le-Bois. The packing, the labelling, the ordering

of the railway omnibus (it is engaged for ten o'clock precisely, but will it—O harassing question—arrive in time?), the emotion of the children, the ferocity of my wife, the deafness of superannuated Amélie—all these miseries have left me as weak as an old cat. You, who have travelled, will appreciate the agony of the situation. No more can I say, for I hear my wife crying: 'Hippolyte, Hippolyte, what are you doing? You must be mad to write letters in such a crisis.'

"Adieu, therefore. Here, very cordially, are the two hands of,

"GEORGES AUGUSTE HIPPOLYTE DURAND."

Excellent, simple M. Durand! From his letter one would suppose that he is about to make the long journey from Paris to the Pyrenees; and that his luggage is proportionately considerable and elaborate. But, as a matter of fact, Marie-le-Bois lies humbly on the outskirts of Paris. A slow train from the St Lazare Station covers the distance in thirty-five minutes. And once arrived there, one clearly perceives, from the top of a small hill, the Sacré Cœur, the dome of the Panthéon, the sightseers (almost their Baedekers) on the Triumphal Arch! Only five and thirty minutes distant from Paris—and yet Madame Durand is "ferocious," her husband is as "weak as an old cat," and the omnibus has been ordered one hour and forty-seven minutes in advance, to drive over the mile that separates M. Durand's dim, musty little flat from the station!

Luggage? As the Villa des Roses is let furnished, only wearing apparel and little particular comforts are required, and so the Durand luggage consists of no more than a shabby large trunk, two dilapidated valises, a bundle, and a collection of sticks, umbrellas, spades for the children and a fishing-rod for their father.

Why spades? There is no sand at Marie-le-Bois. Why that fishing-rod? Not a river floweth within miles and miles of the Villa des Roses. And it must furthermore be revealed that the "wood" of Marie-le-Bois consists in reality of a few acres of shabby bushes, dead grass and gaunt trees; that the villa itself is a hideous, gritty little structure, rendered all the more uninviting by what the estate agent calls an "ornamental" turret, and that never a rose (never even a common sunflower) has bloomed in the scrap of waste ground joyously designated by M. Durand a "garden."

No matter; M. Durand, a simple, small bourgeois, is happy, his good wife rejoices, the three children run wild in the hot, dusty roads, deaf old Amélie is to be heard singing in a feeble, cracked voice in the kitchen; and the Duvals and the Duponts—also of the small bourgeoisie—are equally happy and merry in the equally hideous and gritty villas named "My Pleasure" and "My Repose."

Between them they have hired a rough, bumpy field, in which they play croquet for hours at a time—the ladies in cotton wrappers and the

gentlemen in their shirt-sleeves. But not enough mallets to go round and constant confusion as to whose turn it is to play.

"It is Durand's turn," says Dupont.

"No, it is Madame Durand's," states M. Duval.

"No, it is my turn—I haven't played for twenty minutes," protests the shrill voice of little Marie Dupont.

"Apparently it is somebody's turn," says M. Durand ironically.

And then do the three gentlemen respectively declare that the "situation" is "extraordinary" and "abominable" and—yes, "sinister"; and then, also, do the three wives proclaim their lords "egoists" and—Oh dear me—"imbeciles," and then (profiting by the dispute) do the many children of the Duponts and the Durands and Duvals kick about the balls, and hop over (or dislodge) the hoops, and (when reprimanded) burst into tears.

"It's mad," cries M. Durand.

"Auguste, you disgust me," says Madame Dupont to her husband.

"Mamma, Henri Durand has pulled my hair," sobs little Germaine Duval.

At length on goes the game. But ten minutes later the same confusion, the same cries: "It's my turn," and "No, it is the turn of Madame Dupont," and "I've only played once in the last hour," and "The situation is becoming more and more sinister."

Still, in the scraps of garden of the three villas

there is peace. The gentlemen doze a great deal under their respective, their "own" anæmic trees. Flies buzz about them—but, as M. Durand observes, they are "country flies," and therefore "innocent." In the late afternoon M. Durand puts on his glasses, opens his *Petit Parisien* and says: "Let us hear what is happening in Paris." As a matter of fact, M. Durand can almost hear what is happening in Paris from his chair; but he studies his paper deeply and gives vent to exclamations of "Ah!" and "That dear, extraordinary Paris—always excited, never tranquil!" as though he were an exile in the remotest of foreign lands.

As for M. Dupont, he is of the opinion that although newspapers are out of place in the country, "still a good citizen should keep in touch with affairs." And says M. Duval: "A Parisian, wherever he be, should never altogether forget that he is a Parisian. Therefore it is his duty—I speak, of course, figuratively—to keep one eye on the capital." Figuratively, indeed! M. Duval has only to mount upon his chair to behold Paris with both eyes, most clearly, most vividly.

And now night-time, and a lamp burning on a table in the garden of the Villa des Roses, and around the table, covered with coffee cups, the Durands and the Duponts and the Duvals. Happily they lie back in their chairs. Now and again the peevish, spiteful hum of the mosquito. Odd green insects dash themselves against the glass of the lamp.

"The air of the country, there is nothing like it; it is exquisite, sublime," says M. Durand rapturously. "Breathe it in, my friends, breathe it in, with all your might."

"Durand is right," assents M. Dupont. "Let us not speak; let us only breathe."

"Are we ready?" inquires M. Duval.

And the three M. D.'s and the three Madame D.'s, lying back in their chairs, breathe and breathe.

2. Pension de Famille. The Beautiful Mademoiselle Marie, who loved Gambetta

As a consequence of the death, in her ninety-third year, of Mademoiselle Marie Rosalie Losset, many a successful French barrister, politician and *littérateur* is recalling the early, struggling days of the past. He sees the Rue des Poitevins, a narrow little street in the heart of the Latin Quarter. He remembers the board over one of its doorways: "Pension Laveur. Cuisine Bourgeoise. Prix modérés." He can almost smell the strong evening odour of cabbage and onion soup that assailed him in the dim entrance hall when he returned to the boarding-house exhausted, perhaps depressed from his lectures at the Sorbonne, his studies in the medicine schools, his first visits to the Law Courts.

As I am nothing of a greybeard, I am only able to write of Mademoiselle Marie Rosalie Losset and of the *pension de famille* in the Rue des Poitevins at second hand. It was as far back as 1838

that Mademoiselle Marie, then a *jeune fille* of eighteen, came up to Paris from tranquil, beautiful Savoy to help her sister and brother-in-law, M. and Madame Laveur, to conduct their new boarding-house. Tall, graceful, masses of golden hair—the "Greek Statue," the great Gambetta called her, and the name clung. I must be excused from stating names and events in chronological order—so much has happened since the year 1840! But I can give the precise terms of the *pension*: five or six francs a day for full board, including white or red wine. Also I am able to record that whereas the sister and brother-in-law, M. and Madame Laveur, were suspicious, severe and close-fisted, Mademoiselle Marie Rosalie Losset—"Mademoiselle Marie" for short—was all gaiety and generosity, and sympathised with the struggles, disappointments and financial ennuis of the boarders.

Fortunately for the latter it was Mademoiselle Marie who made up the bills and had charge of the cash-box; the Laveurs occupied themselves exclusively with the kitchen and the household arrangements. Inevitably, the student boarders lost their hearts to the "Greek Statue"; but she laughed at their gallantry, and gaily wanted to know how on earth they could keep a wife when they couldn't pay their own way. Bill of M. Paul a month and thirteen days overdue. Laundry account of M. Pierre five weeks in arrears, and the washerwoman making persistent "inquiries." The washing-basin of M. Jacques, broken an

eternity ago, still standing against him in the boarding-house ledger. And yet they wanted to marry her, all of them—the foolish sentimentalists, the dear, simple imbeciles! No, no; she would try to keep the Laveurs in ignorance of the unpaid bills; she would sew buttons on to M. Paul's shabby coat, and blot out the stains from M. Pierre's; she would say no more of the washing-basin; she would reassure the angry *blanchisseuse*; she would, in a word, do everything for the student boarders except marry them. "Tant pis," cried the latter dramatically, "you have broken my heart. I shall never do anything in this world. You have ruined me!" Replied the radiant Savoyarde: "Nonsense! Work hard, and make a name for yourself. And when you are famous come and see me, and I promise not to remind you of the washerwoman, or the basin, or your faded old coat."

Their studies finished, away from the narrow little Rue des Poitevins went the "heartbroken" boarders to make a "name for themselves." Not so heartbroken but that they became either heroic or distinguished "citizens" of France. At the end of the plain, bourgeois dinner Mademoiselle Marie came to Gambetta's table for dessert, and, amidst a cracking of nuts and the drinking of sour wine, the future great and noble Gambetta tempestuously held forth. A Republic for France was his cry. How the glasses danced as he thumped with his fist on the table! What cheers from the boarders; what a blush and a flush on

the face of the "Greek Statue"! Gambetta stirred that sombre, musty boarding-house as later he roused the whole of France with his eloquence, enthusiasm, his glorious patriotism. His Republican programme was first conceived, his famous social battle-cry—"Le Cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi"—was first sounded in that *pension* of the narrow, obscure Rue des Poitevins. Emotion, we may be sure, of the "Greek Statue" whilst her hero was away with the Army of the Loire. Gloom and hunger in the Pension Laveur during the Siege of Paris; never a sniff of the strong onion soup. Years later—1881—Gambetta Prime Minister, accession of "le Grand Ministère,"—and joy and pride of the "Greek Statue." But downfall of the "Grand Ministère" after only two months' power, and death of Gambetta in the following year—and then, yes, then, so, at least, I surmise, grief and tears of the Savoyarde, the "Greek Statue," now become grey-headed, now a sexagenarian, now known to her boarders as "Tante Marie."

So have we arrived at the twilight of the once radiant Savoyarde's career. She is sixty, and the golden hair has gone grey, and familiarly and affectionately she is known amongst her boarders as "Auntie." Still, however, does she sew on the missing buttons of the *jeunesse* of the Latin Quarter, and allow the *pension* bills to stand over, and overlook the matter of broken washing-basins, and pacify the angry *blanchisseuse*, and encourage her struggling boarders with the old words of

long ago: "Work hard, and make a name for yourself, and come and tell me of your fame. . . ." Years roll on—and "Tante Marie" becomes deaf and frail, and holds a hand to her ear when the *pensionnaires* of the past return to the Rue des Poitevins—elderly, many of them wealthy and distinguished—and pay her homage, and thank her emotionally for her kindnesses, and leave behind them autographed photographs bearing, amongst many other signatures, the names of Alphonse Daudet, François Coppée, Waldeck-Rousseau (Gambetta's disciple), Reclus, the great physician, Millerand (ex-Minister of War), Pichon, the actual French Foreign Secretary, and a former President of the Republic, Emile Loubet. . . . More years roll by and "Tante Marie" becomes bent, shaky and wizened—a nonagenarian. Against her will, she is removed from the sombre, musty old Balzacian *pension* to a small, modern, electric-lighted apartment—where she dies. Dies, in spite of her beauty, brilliancy, irresistibility, a spinster. Dies with the admission: "It was Gambetta I loved. Impossible, of course. But he called me a Greek Statue!"

3. Pension de Famille. French and Piano Lessons. Les Saintes Filles, Mesdemoiselles Périvier

Three years have elapsed since Henri Rochette, the dashing young French financier with the handsome black beard, fell with a crash.

"Le Krach de Rochette. Arrest of the Financier.

Millions of Losses. Ruin of Small Investors," yelled the *camelots* on the boulevards. It was another *affaire*, a gigantic swindle reminiscent of Panama, in that the greater part of the victims were small, thrifty people, who now stood in thousands outside Rochette's closed, darkened offices, weeping, raging, pathetically or passionately demanding the return of their savings.

"That Rochette, he came from nowhere—how did he manage it?" asked the prudent bourgeois, who had steeled himself against Rochette's alluring, rattling circulars.

Yes, Rochette had come from nowhere—or rather, he had come from the country town of Melun, where he was a waiter in a greasy hotel; then he passed as clerk into a financial establishment; next he opened spacious offices of his own and successfully floated a dozen different companies. I believe the chief factor in Rochette's success was the black beard he began to grow and to cultivate assiduously, elaborately, after his departure from Melun. With ambition, audacity and, above all, an ornamental black beard, no Frenchman should fail to make his fortune. Lemoine, the alchemist, Duez, the liquidator of the Religious Congregations, both of them had splendid black beards; and the first lived in great style, at the expense of even so astute a financier as Sir Julius Wernher, and the second kept up costly establishments on money belonging to the State. True, MM. Duez and Lemoine were shorn of their beards and sent to prison. But for a long while,

at all events, a really fine black beard in France can excite admiration, inspire confidence, command capital and make millions.

Well, Rochette fell with a crash—and so a panic, so ruin in Paris. Cases of suicide. Other cases of death from the shock. Bailiffs in possession of small homes and dim shops, and the small people expelled. Up with the shutters in Rochette's splendid offices; away to prison with the swindling financier, and off with his beard. Victims and victims—dazed, broken, distracted. Amongst the forlornest victims, the two Mesdemoiselles Périvier.

"Saintly creatures,' the stout, red-faced Curé of the church of St Sulpice used to say of the Mesdemoiselles Périvier. For years and years they had resided in his parish, attending a Low Mass and High Mass every morning, and Vespers every evening; for years and years they had subscribed to M. le Curé's "good works," and provided his favourite dishes of *vol-au-vent* and *poulet-au-riz* upon those monthly occasions when he dined with them in their dreary, six-roomed flat. It was the most sunless, the most joyless of homes; and the Mesdemoiselles Périvier were the frailest, the simplest, the most frugal of old spinsters, with scarcely a friend and not a relative in the world, and with no experience of the shocks and hardships of life until their small income was lost in the Rochette crash.

Their eyes stained with tears, the two lonely sisters sought out M. le Curé. He consoled them as best he could; urged them to bear their loss

with resignation; exhorted them to seek relief in prayer. And day after day, in shadowy St Sulpice, the Mesdemoiselles Périvier prayed long, earnestly, humbly. Never did a complaint escape them. But they looked frailer and lonelier than ever in their rusty black dresses, as they crossed themselves with holy water on their way out of St Sulpice to their sunless, stricken home.

A few thousand francs invested in French *rentes*, but returning a sum insufficient to satisfy even the Mesdemoiselles Périvier's frugal needs, was all that remained. Imperative, therefore, to do something. And one morning the elder Mademoiselle Périvier (aged sixty-three) and her sister, Mademoiselle Berthe Périvier (three years her junior) affixed a black-edged visiting-card to their door. Under their joint names appeared the intimation: "Pension de Famille. French and Piano Lessons. Moderate Terms."

Then, in the Paris edition of *The New York Herald*, the Mesdemoiselles Périvier offered a home to English and American girls desirous of studying painting in the Latin Quarter; the six-roomed flat, in the shadow of St Sulpice, being also in the neighbourhood of Julian's and Vitti's art schools. A few flower-pots for the flat. The half-dumb, yellow-keyed old piano repaired. Far into the night the Mesdemoiselles Périvier studied French and English grammars; at intervals during the day the elder Mademoiselle Périvier was to be heard practising feebly on the piano . . . against the arrival of pupils and *pensionnaires*.

"Saintly creatures!" repeatedly exclaimed M. le Curé in the houses he visited. Earnestly he recommended the *pension*. Warmly, too, was it spoken of by kindly, well-meaning people.

But it was such a sunless, cheerless place, and the Mesdemoiselles Périvier looked such dim, old-fashioned spinsters in their rusty black dresses, that the recommendations proved fruitless. After a glance at the piano and flower-pots, intending *pensionnaires* took their leave, and found attractive, sociable quarters *chez* Madame Lagrange ("widow of a diplomat"), or at the "Villa des Roses," or the "Pension Select," where there were "musical evenings," five-o'clock teas, electric light, comfortable corners and gossip and laughter.

A year went by; another twelvemonth—and then it became known round and about St Sulpice that the Mesdemoiselles Périvier had been disposing little by little of their Government stock. Yet they were never heard to complain. When dust had dimmed the visiting-card on the door, the card was replaced, and the advertisements still appeared in the Paris *New York Herald.*

It was noticed, however, that the eyes of the Mesdemoiselles Périvier were often swollen and red, that their cheeks showed traces of tears, and that the two lonely spinsters were more assiduous than ever in their visits to St Sulpice. At all times, in all weathers, they made their way to the church, and bowed their heads in prayer in the half-light, amidst the shadows.

It was on her return home from St Sulpice, one bitter afternoon, that Mademoiselle Berthe Périvier, the younger by three years of the two spinsters, contracted pneumonia, and died.

"Une sainte fille, une sainte fille," reiterated M. le Curé, himself sobbing by the bedside.

. . . .

And to-day the black-edged visiting-card—"Pension de Famille. French and Piano Lessons. Moderate Terms"—appears no longer on the door. With her last remaining French *rentes* passed the elder Mademoiselle Périvier. Gone, without a complaint, are the frail, frugal old spinsters. And M. Henri Rochette, on the eve of his release from prison, is growing a new beard.

4. The Affair of the Collars

It is a popular superstition that amongst the smaller French bourgeoisie one day is like another day, and all days are empty, colourless and banal. None of the joys of life—none of its shocks and surprises—up there in the Durands' gloomy and oppressive fifth-floor *appartement*. From morning till night, infinite monotony, relieved only by Madame Durand's periodical altercations with the concierge, the tradespeople, and deaf and dim-eyed old Amélie, the cook. The family newspaper is the *Petit Journal*, because of its two *feuilletons*. In a corner a little, damaged piano, upon which angular and elderly Mademoiselle Durand laboriously picks out the *Polka des Joyeux* and the *Valse Bleue*. In another corner

Madame Durand knits away at a pink woollen shawl. And from a third corner M. Hippolyte Durand, in huge carpet slippers, tells his wife what has happened to him during the day.

The omnibus that took him to his office was full; his lunch consisted of *navarin aux pommes* and stewed pears; after leaving his bureau he played two games of dominoes with Dupont in the Café du Commerce, and the omnibus that brought him home was even fuller than that in which he travelled to business.

"There should be more omnibuses in Paris," remarks Madame Durand.

"And how odious are the conductors!" exclaims elderly and embittered Mademoiselle Durand from the piano.

Then lights out at eleven o'clock, and the dull, dreamless sleep of the unimaginative, the worthy.

However, this popularly conceived idea of the life and mind of the smaller French bourgeoisie is something of a libel. Their existence is not eternally uneventful, nor their temperament hopelessly colourless. Now and again the dim, oppressive fifth-floor *appartements* are shaken by "Affairs" quite as exciting and incoherent in their own way as those that have convulsed the Palace of Justice and Chamber of Deputies. There was once a Dreyfus Affair. There were also the Syveton and Steinheil Affairs. All three caused the Parisians (who dearly love imbroglios and incoherencies) to exclaim: "C'est le comble!"—in colloquial English: "It's the limit!"

But, in the Montparnasse quarter of Paris, there rages to-day an Affair that must be awarded the first place amongst all other Affairs for sheer confusion, dizziness and irresponsibility.

Thus :

Three weeks ago M. Henri Bouzon, a stout, middle-aged bourgeois, bought a dozen new collars from a " general " clothing establishment known as " The Joy of the Gentleman." In due course the collars went to the laundry, but twelve other collars were returned in their place, and these M. Bouzon rejected. A second lot of collars—again somebody else's. Then a third wrong delivery, and a fourth. By the time a fifth contingent had arrived M. Bouzon was collarless and desperate.

" Once again, these are not my collars," he cried. " But as they fit me, I will keep them."

Next day, appearance of Madame Martin, the *blanchisseuse*, in a state of emotion. The fifth contingent of collars belonged to a M. Aristide Dubois, who was clamouring for them. He had acquired them only recently at " The Paradise of the Bachelor," and was furious at their loss.

" Bother Aristide Dubois," shouted M. Bouzon. " Where are my own dozen collars from ' The Joy of the Gentleman ' ? Return them and I will give up the Dubois collars—which I am wearing."

Despair of the *blanchisseuse*. She searched and searched for the Bouzon collars, but in vain ; and tearfully, then frantically did she implore Henri Bouzon to be " amiable " and " gentil " and surrender up the collars of Aristide Dubois.

" He is a terrible man—such a temper," pleaded the *blanchisseuse.* " I had to tell him you were wearing his collars, and he threatened to call on you and tear them off your neck."

" Let him come," cried M. Bouzon. Then, following Madame Martin out on to the staircase he shouted over the banisters : " And tell Dubois from me that he is a brigand and a bandit."

Inevitably, the concierges and tradespeople of Montparnasse got to hear of the dispute. It was discussed in doorways and at street corners, and in her steamy *blanchisserie* Madame Martin held little levees of the Montparnasse servants, who took the story home to their masters and mistresses, who in their turn became garrulous and excited over the Dubois and Bouzon collars. Then, one memorable afternoon, Aristide Dubois —another stout and middle-aged bourgeois—called upon Henri Bouzon. And the following dialogue took place :—

" Sir, you are wearing the collars I bought recently at ' The Paradise of the Bachelor.' "

" Sir, I have no wish to speak to you, and I beg you to withdraw."

" Monsieur, vous aurez de mes nouvelles."

That was all, but it caused a commotion in Montparnasse. Aristide Dubois' last words, " Sir, you will hear from me," signified nothing less than a duel. Yes ; Bouzon and Dubois on the field of honour, sword or pistol in hand, with doctors in attendance ! " Both of them are terrible men," related Madame Martin, whose

blanchisserie now became a popular place of rendez-vous. "Impossible to reason with them. They will fight to the death." Equally sought after were the respective concierges of the Dubois and Bouzon families, and the tradespeople who served them.

The discussion spreading, all Montparnasse soon found itself indirectly and chaotically mixed up in the Affair of the Collars. It was Collars in a hundred bourgeois homes, in cafés, in the shady Luxembourg Gardens, even amongst the enormous, apoplectic *cochers* on the cab-ranks.

"I am for Dubois," declared some.

"Henri Bouzon has my sympathy," announced others. "It is the most distracting of affairs," agreed everybody. Thus, fame of Henri Bouzon and Aristide Dubois! After fifty years of obscurity, there they were—suddenly—the Men of the Hour. Such was their importance, their renown, that when they appeared in the Montparnasse streets people nudged one another and whispered:

"Here comes Henri Bouzon."

And: "There goes Aristide Dubois."

. . . Such has been the state of Montparnasse during the last three weeks, and to-day that usually tranquil neighbourhood is literally convulsed by the Affair of the Collars. No duel has taken place: but MM. Dubois and Bouzon exchange lurid letters, in which they call one another "traitors," and "Apaches," and "sinister assassins." Thus, shades of the Dreyfus Affair and of the Affairs Syveton and Steinheil! Here, in the Café du Dôme, sits M. Bouzon, surrounded by

Bouzonites. There, in the Café de la Rotonde, M. Dubois and his own supporters are established,—and in both places, night after night, hot controversies rage, the marble tables are thumped, and MM. Dubois and Bouzon are severally applauded and toasted by their admirers. Become celebrities, they have blossomed out into silk hats and frock coats, and the waiters bow before them, and the café proprietors actually address them as "cher maître." At times they dramatically exclaim: "Ah, my poor head! This affair is destroying me: but I will fight to the last," and there are murmurs of sympathy, which MM. Bouzon and Dubois (always in their respective cafés) acknowledge with the condescension of a Briand or a Delcassé or a Clemenceau. For, most indisputably, they are great public characters. The post brings them letters of congratulation or abuse; the policemen salute them: and "The Paradise of the Bachelor" has named a collar after Aristide Dubois, whilst "The Joy of the Gentleman" has issued the intimation: "For ease, chic, durability, wear the Collar Bouzon." Then, to live up to their renown as the Men of the Hour, MM. Dubois and Bouzon go about with bulky portfolios under their arms, and a grim, determined expression. "They are doing too much. They will certainly collapse. It is even worse than the Dreyfus Affair," says Montparnasse. And, exclaims Madame Martin, in her steamy and crowded *blanchisserie*: "Terrible men! I have tried to make peace between them by

offering them all kinds of collars. I have even declared myself ready to buy them collars out of my own pocket. But they only go red in the face, and shout, and won't hear a word."

And now—in the words of the journalists—a "sensational development." It is announced, breathlessly, hysterically by Madame Martin, that at last she has traced the dozen missing collars, bought by M. Bouzon at "The Joy of the Gentleman," to the bourgeois fifth-floor *appartement* of a M. Alexandre Dupont. He has been wearing them all these weeks. And he refuses to surrender them. And he, too, is a "terrible man." And he has called M. Dubois a "convict," and M. Bouzon "le dernier des misérables." And, if they come within his reach, he will hurl both of them into the Seine.

"Le comble" [the limit], gasps Montparnasse. All over the neighbourhood goes the statement that M. Alexandre Dupont bought *his* dozen collars at that other Montparnasse clothing establishment, "The One Hundred Thousand Supreme Shirts."

"The man Alexandre Dupont is as great a scoundrel as the man Aristide Dubois," cries M. Bouzon to his admiring supporters in the Café du Dôme.

"It is impossible to determine which of the two is the more infamous and diabolical, the creature Bouzon or the lunatic Dupont," shouts M. Dubois, amidst the cheers of his followers in the Café de la Rotonde.

"Bouzon and Dubois—I consign them to the Seine and the Morgue," storms Alexandre Dupont, addressing his newly gathered partisans in the Café du Répos.

Out comes that other "general" clothing establishment, "The One Hundred Thousand Supreme Shirts," with the announcement: "The Only Collar in Paris is the Collar Dupont."

"All three of them are terrible," affirms Madame Martin to her audience in the stifling *blanchisserie.*

"The collars of Bouzon, then the collars of Dubois, and next the collars of Dupont—but where have they all gone to? Where are we? What is going to happen!" cries, emotionally and distractedly, Montparnasse.

Nobody knows. Nobody will ever know. But Bouzon, Dubois and Dupont, so obscure three weeks ago, are the Men of the Hour in Montparnasse to-day. And one of the three will, almost indubitably, represent Montparnasse in the Hôtel de Ville after the next Municipal Election,—then be promoted to the Chamber of Deputies—then will eloquently, passionately inform the Palais Bourbon that Incoherency is the Peril of the Present Age.

V

ON STRIKE

1. When it was Dark in Paris

EIGHT o'clock at night, and the electric lights burning brightly, and the band playing gaily, and the customers chatting happily in this large, comfortable café. Although it is the " dead " season, business is brisk. Here and there an elegant Parisienne, eating an ice. In corners, groups of card-players. And next to me, three stout, red-faced, prosperous-looking bourgeois, to whom the proprietor of the café pays particular attention. He hopes they are well. He hopes their ladies and their dear children are well. He hopes their affairs are going well. From their replies, I learn that the three bourgeois are important tradesmen of the quarter.

Suddenly their conversation turns to strikes—and naturally my three neighbours are indignant with the strikers. The strikers spoil affairs; the strikers should therefore be arrested, imprisoned, transported. Half-a-dozen of them might be executed, as an example. The Bourse du Travail and the offices of the General Confederation of Labour should be razed to the ground. No other country but France would tolerate such anarchy. One is on the verge of a revolution, and——

At this point the scores of electric lights jump excitedly—turn dim—go out. And it is darkness.

"The strikers!" exclaims the first bourgeois.

"The electricians!" cries the second.

"Ah, the scoundrels, the brigands, the assassins!" shouts the third.

Mercy me, the excitement! The three bourgeois light matches, everyone lights matches,—and in the light from the matches I see the proprietor standing on a chair in the middle of the café. Loudly he claps his hands; loudly he cries to the waiters: "Candles." Then, for some mysterious reason, the customers also mount chairs. The lights have gone out, so one mounts chairs! If you don't immediately mount a chair when the lights have gone out, heaven only knows what will not happen to you. And so I, too, stand on a chair, and light matches, and join in the cries of: "It's a strike; it's a strike."

For my own part, I rejoice. I love the cries, the confusion, the amazing aspect of Paris—when it is dark. Here, in this café, the band is idle; the card-players have stopped their games; the proprietor is still clapping his hands and clamouring for candles. However, no candlesticks: so, vulgarly, as in low places, one uses bottles. A bottle for every table and the grease (another low spectacle) trickles down the bottles. The lady at the desk, whose highly important duty it is to keep the accounts, is given a dilapidated old lantern. Very old and very dilapidated, too, are the petroleum lamps brought up from the cellars

where they have remained hidden so long as to acquire a sinister coating of verdigris. "It's deadly poison," says one of the bourgeois next to me. "I won't have it. Fetch me a candle." So the waiter bringeth the bourgeois a candle, and, no sooner has he placed the bottle on the table than it topples over and falls against the breast of the bourgeois.

"A cloth, a cloth!" he shouts. "I am covered with grease." And he storms. And he goes purple in the face. And violently he rubs his waistcoat, making the stains worse. And as he rubs he cries furiously, of the strikers: "Ah, the scoundrels, the brigands, the assassins."

In the street, only gas. And as I make my way to the *grands boulevards*, I perceive waiters speeding about in all directions, and hear them asking policemen for the nearest grocer's shop. The waiters are in quest of candles. The waiters dare not return to their cafés without packets and packets of candles. But most of the grocers are closed: and so on speed the waiters, flushed, breathless, through the gloom.

No theatres to-night. Out went the lights just as the curtain was about to rise, and on to the stage stepped the manager, lamp or candlestick in hand—a sepulchral figure—to beg the audience to disperse in good order. No telephones to-night. Out went the lights in the Exchange, to the confusion, to the terror of the ladies. They are there in the darkness, waiting for candles. Then, gloom in most of the newspaper offices.

Out went the lights, suddenly, unanimously. "Lamps, candles!" shouted the editor. Thus, office-boys also in desperate quest of candles. And they come into collision with the waiters. And there are tumultuous scenes in the grocers' shops. And the grocers cry desperately: "One at a time; one at a time. I shall faint. I shall lose my reason. I shall die."

Thousands and thousands of candles in the handsome cafés of the *grands boulevards*, and all of them in vulgar bottles. Thus, infinite candle grease; also, more verdigris. But what a difference between the tempers of the bourgeois and the boulevardier! M. le Boulevardier laughs, jokes, rejoices. He is in search of a friend,—and so picketh up a bottle and makes a tour of the café. "Clever fellows; they struck just at the right hour," he says, of the strikers. Amiable, too, are the English visitors to Paris in Darkness. A charming young girl near me produces picture post cards and writes hurriedly by candlelight. And I expect she is writing: "My Dear,—Such fun, such excitement, I wish you were here. All the electric lights have gone out and we've only got candles. It's too funny. I'll tell you all about it to-morrow. Best love from Ethel."

On the terraces of the cafés strings of Chinese lanterns are being put up by the waiters; down the boulevards rush frantic hawkers with revolutionary newspapers, *The Social War* and *The Voice of the People*; along them, at a trot, comes a detachment of cuirassiers. "The troops," cries

a Parisian. "Clemenceau is at it again," says another. "A few years ago Clemenceau fiercely denounced the practice of sending troops against the strikers," remarks a third. "But to-day M. Clemenceau is Prime Minister," replies a fourth.

Now, candles burn down and have to be replaced. Now, too, theatrical managers, newspaper men and all those most affected by the darkness discuss the probable length of the strike. "A couple of days at the most," says a manager. "Perhaps only twenty-four hours," says his friend. "Clemenceau is already taking measures to——"

But even as he speaks the electric lights break into a dull glow,—jump excitedly,—then flash. The strike is over; it was but a two-hours' strike, intended as a protest against the killing of three strikers by the troops at Villeneuve-St-Georges and as a proof of what the Electricians' Trade Union can do.

So away go the candles and the old lamps. The bands strike up; the card-players resume their games; the newspapers go to press. "The assassins had to give in," says the bourgeois exultingly. "The electricians will surprise us again," says the boulevardier, with a laugh. "I'm so sorry it's all over," says the charming young English girl, glancing at her post cards. And so am I: for I love the cries, the confusion, the amazing aspect of Paris, when it is dark.

2. Birds of the State at the Post Office

From a very fascinating English girl, domiciled in Yorkshire, I have just received the following request:—"I hear you are having another postal strike in Paris, and that carrier-pigeons are being used. How charming! And what a lucky man you are to be living in such an exciting country! Down here nothing ever happens. So do be a dear and send me a letter by a pigeon—it would be lovely."

Thus news travels slowly to my very fascinating correspondent's home in Yorkshire. The postal strike, the general strike and all the other strikes are over: and yet it is certain that if I could but gratify Miss Ethel Grahame's desire I should rise considerably in her esteem. Strike or no strike, she would dearly love to have a pigeon, that had flown all the way from the *grands boulevards* to Scarborough, come tapping at her window. To her friends she would say: "Look! A letter from Paris! And brought all that long, long distance by a pigeon!" Naturally, cries of astonishment from the friends. Then, great headlines in the local papers: "Pigeon-Carrying Extraordinary," and "Pigeon as Postman," and "The Pigeon from Paris." Next, consternation of Miss Ethel Grahame's innumerable admirers, who would immediately proceed to fear and hate me as a formidable rival. And finally, and best of all, my letter put carefully away, and preserved for ever and for ever, in a scented desk.

Dreams, only dreams! I know nothing about pigeons; and then it has been stated that every pigeon in France, who is anything of a carrier, has been requisitioned by the Government. The postal strike is over, but the carrier-pigeons of Paris and of the provinces nevertheless remain at the exclusive disposal of the Cabinet. They have become State birds; they may fly only for the Republic.

So, what a life! As I cross the Luxembourg Gardens (the pleasantest of all the Paris parks), this fine, sunny afternoon, I reflect bitterly over the absurdity and irony of things. Gorgeous, costly birds, such as the parrot or the peacock, I could easily obtain; but a plain carrier-pigeon, no! Since the French Government is responsible for my predicament, may it fall! And may the State birds (if ever employed) play M. Clemenceau and his colleagues false! And——

A pigeon! Yes—there, on the path before me—a fine, strong, handsome pigeon; the very pigeon to make the trip from Paris to Scarborough. And my heart beats. And my brow throbs. And I am all excitement, all emotion, when—O bitter disappointment!—it suddenly occurs to me that this must be an ordinary pigeon, one of those idle, good-for-nothing pigeons that hop about public gardens in quest of crumbs. That is his life; that is all he is capable of doing. O fool that I was, to have thought for a moment that here was the very bird to go tapping at Miss Ethel Grahame's window!

Yes, what a life! As I make my way to the *grands boulevards* it dawns upon me that I have never seen a carrier-pigeon, and that therefore I have no idea what he looks like. Also, suppose I wonderfully succeeded in securing one, what should I say to him, what should I do with him? In fact, how does one tell a carrier-pigeon where to go? And——

Two pigeons on the steps of this church, but of the before-mentioned greedy, good-for-nothing kind. Then, more pigeons in this poulterer's, but dormant, dead. And next, on the menu of a café, the intimation in bold, red letters: "This Day: Braised Pigeon and Green Peas."

In this café, in their accustomed corner, I find M. Henri Durand and M. Marcel Bertrand, two amiable, chatty, middle-aged little Frenchmen with whom I am on cordial, confidential terms. Thinking they may help me, I tell them of my trouble, and extraordinary are their expressions when I have finished.

"My admirable but unfortunate friend, you are ill," gasps M. Bertrand. "My excellent but unhappy neighbour from Across the Channel, the heat has disturbed you," cries M. Durand. And then (after I have denied that I am suffering either from illness or from the heat) M. Bertrand solemnly holds forth:

"You ask for a carrier-pigeon to take a letter to a very adorable miss who lives in Yorkshire. But, my poor old one, French pigeons have never heard of Yorkshire,—and neither have I and

neither has our friend Durand here, and neither, I am sure, has anyone in France. But I will not insist: this Yorkshire is not the point. The point is, every carrier-pigeon in France has been proclaimed a bird of the State. In Paris, there are 15,000; in the provinces, 150,000, thus 165,000 in all; and all of them have been mobilised—yes, mobilised by order of the Government. In fact, a carrier-pigeon to-day occupies the same position as a soldier or a sailor. True, he cannot fight; but upon command, he must fly. And yet you ask for one of these State birds! Unfortunate friend, you might as well ask for a regiment or a military balloon, or a war-ship."

But still more extraordinary revelations follow. I hear, for instance, that the 15,000 carrier-pigeons in Paris are housed in the various ministries—yes, every ministry in Paris is a vast dovecot. Two thousand pigeons for the Minister of War; three thousand pigeons for the Minister of Justice, and six thousand pigeons for the Prime Minister.

"He also keeps pigeons at his private residence," states M. Bertrand. "If he heard you wanted one of his State birds, he would have you arrested."

"So," I sigh, "there is nothing to be done." And sympathetically M. Bertrand replies: "Alas, my poor, lovesick one, nothing. I regret it with all my heart, but you must tell the blonde, adorable miss that birds of the State may fly only for their own country."

Then up speaks M. Durand, and I learn that the

15,000 State birds in Paris are being wonderfully looked after, even spoilt. Never such comfortable, pleasant dovecots; never such plentiful, excellent fare! "It is to be hoped," concludes M. Durand, "that they are not being overfed, and that they are not contracting idle, luxurious habits; for that would be disastrous."

And here I rise. And after I have taken leave of MM. Durand and Bertrand, I go to the nearest post office and send Miss Ethel Grahame the following expensive telegram:—

"Deeply sorry no pigeon available. Have done my very best. Writing full particulars. Can only say meanwhile that every pigeon in France has been proclaimed a Bird of the State."

3. After the Storm at Villeneuve-St-Georges

Down here at Villeneuve-St-Georges, the sandpit district ten miles away from Paris, there has been a savage collision between the soldiers and the strikers. The sandpit men—some five or six thousand powerful navvies in all—raised barricades in the narrow, cobbled streets. When the dragoons and cuirassiers advanced, they were met with shower upon shower of flints, bottles, bricks. Revolvers, too, were fired at them. From windows, guns were discharged. Rising in his stirrups, an officer at last shouted forth the terrible official ultimatum: "Retire! Let all good citizens withdraw, for we are about to use force and arms." Then, three bugle calls: the

final warning. But still the officer hesitated to give the order to open fire. Again, the three bugle calls; and yet again. The horses plunged and reared; now and again a soldier, struck by a huge brick, was thrown from his saddle to the ground. Fierce shouts of execration from the strikers, the captain of the cuirassiers unsaddled by half a paving-stone. For the last time, the three bugle calls. And immediately after them the command: "Fire!"

There were yells of agony, there were frightful oaths—and there was a frantic retreat. The strikers fled to the open fields, a few hundred yards away. The troops demolished the barricades, and occupied every street. When darkness had descended upon Villeneuve-St-Georges it was known that three strikers had been shot dead, and nearly a hundred more or less seriously wounded. Four officers and a number of soldiers had been injured. At nine o'clock a group of strikers, pushing a barrow containing the body of one of the dead strikers, stopped before the general commanding the troops, and said: "Salute your victim." The general gravely saluted. Away went the strikers with their barrow. All night long the cuirassiers and dragoons patrolled Villeneuve-St-Georges and the surrounding open country. In the town itself no one could sleep for the clatter on the cobblestones of the horses' hoofs.

Such were the scenes in the sandpit district yesterday; but to-day—the day after—a com-

parative calm has succeeded the storm. When I enter Villeneuve-St-Georges, officers and soldiers are walking and riding about the streets, and now and again a patrolling party goes by. Here and there, groups of strikers, in their baggy blue trousers. And in the wine-shops, which are full, long, animated conversations. Who was in the wrong? No one denies that it was the strikers who fired first; no one disputes the patience of the troops, who remained imperturbable, motionless in their saddles, amidst a storm of bricks and bottles, for two whole hours. Then, most of the soldiers fired in the air: had they fired on the men the slaughter would have been terrific. Here in this wine-shop, I hear all this, and not only from the soldiers, but from the strikers, who are present. Yes; the soldiers and strikers, twenty-four hours after the conflict, are drinking and conversing together: fraternising, resting their hands on one another's shoulders. Very rough and very large are the hands of the navvies: the hands that hurled the bottles and bricks. And very grimy, very weary, very eyesore are the dragoons and cuirassiers, after having patrolled the district all night.

Extraordinary this "fraternising"! The enemies of yesterday sit at the same table. The men in uniform and the men in the baggy blue trousers clink glasses together.

"Of course I have done my military service, but I was never sent to a strike," says one of the navvies.

"You were lucky," replies a dragoon, with a laugh.

Who was at fault? "It is all the fault of les patrons—the masters," states a striker; and he proceeds to relate how he and his colleagues are underpaid and overworked: how they are treated as slaves by the masters. It is also "Clemenceau's fault." Why did he send troops? There was no disorder: there was no need for soldiers. "Clemenceau has treated us as he treated the miners at Courrières." And the men in the blue trousers mutter angrily against the French Premier.

Another wine-shop, and the same scene: strikers and soldiers fraternising. Says one of the former: "Let us have another coffee; for to-night we may be fighting again." Replies a cuirassier: "One never knows. But remember we are the stronger." Officers passing down the street glance into the open doors of the wine-shops, and smile indulgently at the strange spectacle. "The General!" suddenly cries a navvy. And the General it is: a tall, slim man, keen-eyed, grey-headed, dignified. After looking up and down the street, he enters a café with three officers. Coffee and a liqueur for M. le Général. A penny cigar for M. le Général. A dozen navvies crowd into the café, sit down, and scrutinise M. le Général. He smiles, then resumes his conversation with the officers. But he rises all of a sudden to shake hands warmly with the Captain of the cuirassiers who was thrown off

his horse by half a paving-stone in yesterday's conflict. The Captain's head is bandaged; one sees only his nose and his ears, and his left hand is in a sling.

"Ca va mieux ?" asks the General.

"Ce n'est rien, mon Général," replies the Captain.

"It was not his fault. And he saluted the body of our comrade," says a navvy, of the General.

"He must suffer, but he does not show it. And he looks sympathetic," says another striker, of the Captain.

Amazing this good-fellowship! Only in France could it be witnessed, and for the reason that in France every man is, or has been, a soldier. The officers call their men "my children." The officers also call the strikers "my children"; how often, down at bleak, tragical Courrières, did I hear them implore the miners to retreat, whilst the flints and bricks were flying savagely about them; and how often were the three bugle calls sounded, when, according to stern military law, they should have been sounded but once! "My children," cried an old Colonel at Courrières, "for the love of heaven, retire. It will break our hearts to shoot. Once again, for the love of heaven, retire."

Such then is the condition, the temper of Villeneuve-St-Georges to-day: twenty-four hours after the battle. Nor will the battle be resumed. The strike of the sandpit men—like all strikes in

France—has been quashed by the soldiers. Only memories remain, and relics, and landmarks. By the side of the street lies the debris of the barricades. On thc walls are dents, scratches, holes made by the bullets. Now and again an injured man, soldier or striker, more or less bandaged, passes by. In the wine-shops and cafés, the men in uniform and the men in the baggy blue trousers continue to discuss yesterday's conflict over their coffee, and fraternise.

VI

COTTIN & COMPANY

HERE, under the shadow of the great Porte St-Martin, congregate old actors and old actresses, who are engaged either at vast, shabby, outlying theatres (Batignolles, Ternes, Belleville, Bouffes du Nord), or who are only awaiting an engagement somewhere, anywhere.

Old actors and actresses on the kerbstone, old actors and old actresses in this dingy little café, with the hard benches, grimy windows and dusty floor. Among the old actors, old Cottin.

How, as he stands dejectedly on the kerbstone or sits gloomily before his glass of coffee, how, if he liked, could old Cottin amuse and surprise us with his tales! His Majesty King Edward VII., when Prince of Wales, was pleased to compliment old Cottin on his humorous expression and wink and grin; old Cottin who has lost that grin, and whose expression is more tragic than comic, and whose dim eye winks no longer. The name—"Cottin"—appeared in gigantic characters on the bills; the entrance of Cottin was the signal for laughter and applause. But if ever the name of Cottin again appear on a theatrical poster it will be in some obscure, out-of-the-way theatre; and if ever Cottin again addresses an audience it

will be feebly, unspontaneously, from a rough, draughty old stage. And if we could witness the awakening and rising of old Cottin in his chilly little attic, we should not see him attended by a valet as in former days : but assist at the spectacle of old Cottin brushing vehemently away at his threadbare clothes, and stitching up a rent with a darning needle, and clipping the fray from off his collars and cuffs with blunt, rusty scissors, and generally aspiring to smarten himself up, with the object of obtaining an engagement somewhere, anywhere.

Under the shadow of the great Porte St-Martin, on the kerbstone or in the dingy little café, in his greasy hat and threadbare clothes, old Cottin awaits the arrival of small suburban or provincial managers. It is their practice to come here when in need of an actor who will play innumerable rôles, at forty or fifty francs a week; and they pick out their actors brusquely, roughly, and with many a coarse joke. But once old Cottin dealt only with renowned, illustrious managers.

"Mon bon Cottin," said the renowned, illustrious managers.

"Mon cher directeur," said the renowned, illustrious Cottin.

"Epatant, étourdissant extraordinaire," was the boulevardier's enthusiastic appreciation of Cottin.

Poor old Cottin, late of a boulevard theatre!

Let us not go prying into the secrets of Cottin's life; the cause of his gloom and downfall is not

our affair. Nor are we entitled to search the careers of these other old actors and actresses who, perhaps in their day, were almost as famous as Cottin; and who, like him, have very much come down in the world. Anyhow, there is genuine, friendly sympathy between these shabby, clean-shaven old fellows — and also between their sisters, who are over-stout or over-thin, over-"made-up" or over-pale, over-garrulous or over-still. In this café, they are *chez eux*, they are *en famille.* In this café, they speak frankly, easily of themselves. Madame Marguerite de Brémont, for instance: a woman of sixty, with great black eyebrows, a powdered face, and a deep, deep voice. Enormous is Madame Marguerite de Brémont, who is cast for the part of *chiffonnière*, mad-woman, hideous, unnatural mother, at the Batignolles Theatre, at forty-five francs a week. With her, a shabby black bag, and also, as a last *coquetterie*, a black satin reticule, from which she occasionally produces an old powder puff, and a handkerchief edged (by her own hand) with coarse yellow lace. Such a deep, deep voice, and such sweeping, melodramatic gestures with, alas! rough, large hands. Forty-five francs a week, but, honour of honours, a benefit performance this summer. And Madame Marguerite de Brémont is telling a group of superannuated comedians that, upon this glorious occasion, the manager will allow her to have the pick of the Batignolles wardrobe. She will appear in no fewer than five melodramatic rôles, "created" by her twenty, thirty

years ago; and, in looking over the Batignolles wardrobe, she has been particularly impressed by a heavy, yellow velvet dress trimmed lavishly with pearls.

"Yellow was my colour," says Madame Marguerite de Brémont, "and, for jewellery, I always wore pearls."

"Our Marguerite," observes an emaciated old fellow, "will have an extraordinary reception. We shall all cry: 'Vive la de Brémont!'"

"Ma chère," puts in a faded, wrinkled woman, with bright (and bad) gold hair, "I have always said that yellow was your colour. All women have their hair, but the actresses of to-day wear any colour, and the result is deplorable."

"Yes, yes," says the de Brémont, "I shall appear in yellow." And she powders her face feverishly, at the prospect of once again appearing in yellow and pearls.

"C'est bien, ça": exclaims old Cottin, at the conclusion of an anecdote. A charming anecdote, related thus, by a little imp of a man, with the comedian's large mouth and ever-changing expression. . . . In an actor's charitable home the doyen of them all is an old fellow of eighty-four, who was a favourite in his day. He passes the time pleasantly enough, in toddling about the garden on a stick, and in reading faded, yellow Press criticisms of years and years ago that describe him as "marvellous," "incomparable," "irresistible." But, one morning, he hears that his sister-in-law — once a brilliant vaudeville

actress—is homeless and penniless, at the tragic age of seventy-nine, and he becomes gloomy and silent: and he asks to see the manager of the home. "We are full," replies the manager, "and so we cannot receive your sister-in-law." The old fellow's eyes become dim, and at last the old fellow explains: "I wish to marry my sister-in-law." Gently the manager observes: "But even if you marry her, there will be a difficulty. Our rations are limited, and if you marry her there will only be one portion for the two." A meeting between the old fellow of eighty-four and the old woman of seventy-nine. And a marriage between the old fellow of eighty-four and the old woman of seventy-nine, attended by all the old actors and old actresses of the Home, not one of whom tells less than sixty, not one of whom can toddle about without a stick. Bottles of champagne, from the manager of the Home. An address, from the aged inmates of the Home. And to-day the old couple toddle about together in the garden, and together read the Press criticisms of years and years ago, and together recall the days when the one was a brilliant vaudeville actress, and the other was a "marvellous, an incomparable, an irresistible" comedian.

A flashy-looking young man in a check suit and pink shirt looks in, and tells old Cottin and others that "there is nothing to-day"—an agent for the suburban, the provincial theatres.

"By all means, yellow," he says carelessly, in reply to Madame Marguerite de Brémont's

anxious question as to what colour she should wear. Then, more amiably: "I subscribe for twenty francs, and if you receive a bouquet of roses, yellow roses, preserve it in memory of your devoted Jules."

"Ce bon Jules!" exclaims the de Brémont, as Jules, the agent, hurries out of the café. "Il a du cœur, celui-là." And opens the black bag. And scribbles down something—probably "20 francs"—in a little greasy book, with a stump of a pencil. And heaves a deep sigh of satisfaction. And expresses the hope that she will not be too *émotionée* on the night of her benefit.

At least thirty old actors and old actresses in the café: and most of them with empty glasses. A lull, during which many look vacantly before them, while others tap with their boots on the floor and drum with their fingers on the tables. Great yawns, and occasional stretching of arms, and often the exclamation: "Mais je m'ennuie, je m'ennuie!" In a corner, a dingy waiter is sprawled over a racing paper, and behind the counter, the burly proprietor, in his shirt sleeves, dozes. Outside, the hoarse shouts of the *camelots*, selling the evening papers. Outside, the animation of the boulevards.

"Messieurs, Mesdames."

A quick, brusque voice, and a short, stout little man, with a huge watch-chain, an umbrella, a thick black moustache, a double chin and a great swollen neck.

"Has Jules been here? What is the use of Jules? What is the use of any agent? I call at his office; he is not there. I ask where he is; no one can tell. I come here—although I have not a moment to spare."

A manager; at last, a manager! And the manager of one of the vast, shabby, outlying theatres, who also sends companies out on tour.

"I have need of four men, two ladies, and a child, for *The Terror of the Fortifications.* Tour starts at St Quentin on Monday week, and lasts twenty-one weeks. I want workers. Salary for men, not more than fifty francs; for women, forty to fifty; for the child, twenty-five."

"Mais c'est bien, c'est très bien, Monsieur le Directeur," says old Cottin, say old Cottin's comrades. And old Cottin and three of his friends, and the faded, wrinkled lady with the bright (and bad) gold hair, and one of her friends, all rise before Monsieur le Directeur.

"I will try to find the child," says the faded woman.

"Girl," says the director. "Small, thin and not over eleven. Come to see me to-morrow morning at twelve." And the stout director waddles out.

"They say it is *épatant*, the *Terror of the Fortifications*," observes an old actor.

"Ah," replies old Cottin absentmindedly: old Cottin, late of a boulevard theatre.

"Au revoir," says Madame Marguerite de Brémont, picking up her reticule and bag. "Au

revoir, and good luck. I shall tell the director to-night that I have chosen the yellow and pearls."

Four old actors, and two old actresses, at one table, with their heads together.

"The curtain rises in a hovel," says one of the old actors, and proceeds to narrate the plot of *The Terror of the Fortifications.*

VII

THE LATIN QUARTER

1. Mère Casimir

"Il était une fois."

AFTER weeks of summer idleness the students of the Latin Quarter return in October to the Boul' Mich' more exhilarated, more extravagant, more garrulous than ever. They are delighted to be back; they are impatient to *conspuer* certain professors; to parade the streets with lanterns and guys; to disturb the sleep of the bourgeois; to run into debt with their landlords, to embrace the policemen—to commit a hundred other follies. Clad in new corduroys, covered with astonishing hats, they call for big *bocks* — then question the waiter. But ere he can give a recital of what has taken place on the Rive Gauche during the holidays, the waiter—*ce sacré* François — has to hear how Paul (of the Faculty of Medicine) has been bathing, Pierre (of the Law) bicycling, Gaston (of the Fine Arts) gardening; and how all three of them wore "le boating" costume (whatever that may signify), with white shoes, pale blue waistbands and green umbrellas; and how their food was of the simplest, and their drink, pure, babylike milk.

Adventures? Romances?

Well, for an entire month, Paul was as sad, as lovesick, as pale as a pierrot. *She* was a blonde . . . in a cottage . . . as sweet and fresh as a rose . . . as modest as the violet . . . as innocent as a child . . . who got up with the lark and retired with the sun. And Paul rose equally early, to peep over the hedge of her garden and to hear her sing, as she fed greedy, speckled poultry; and, from a lane, watched her window—then wandered sentimentally and wistfully abroad—at night. Suddenly, she vanished. And when Paul learnt that she had departed for Normandy to become the bride of a cousin, Paul of the Faculty of Medicine—Paul, the gayest character in the Latin Quarter and the hero of many an affair of the heart—Paul, lost his appetite, Paul, experienced the agonies of insomnia, Paul, aged at least a hundred years all at once.

Thus Paul. No less reminiscent Pierre and Gaston. So that their lady friends, Mesdemoiselles Mimi and Musette—at once jealous and impatient—proceed to relate their own experiences; which, by the way, are but flights of imagination, conceived with the idea of infuriating the students.

He also was blonde—and wore an *incomparable* suit of "le boating." How *he* swam—far more magnificently than Paul! How *he* bicycled—far more swiftly than Pierre! How *he* gardened: producing infinitely choicer flowers than Gaston's!

"Enough! You have never left Paris. All

those wonderful friends of yours do not exist," cry the students. And the *sacré* waiter François (who has been toying all this time with his napkin) at last is permitted to relate what has been happening in the Latin Quarter during the summer holidays.

As a rule, however, he has little to say. Of course, the Boul' Mich' has been dull. Tourists from "sinister" Germany and from *la vieille Angleterre* have "looked" for students and amusements—naturally in vain. Mademoiselle Mimi owes nine francs for refreshments. And Mademoiselle Musette two francs eighty centimes for a cab fare. That is all.

But when the students "ushered" in the present autumn season, François the waiter had important, solemn news to impart. And it was with sincere sorrow that they learnt that death, in their absence, had claimed the queer little old woman who carried a match-tray in her trembling, bony hands; who performed feeble, vague dances; who piped old-time airs, and related old-time anecdotes; and who had lived amongst Mürger's sons, ever since they could remember, under the name of Mère Casimir. . . .

No city but Paris could have produced the little old woman: and no other community would have put up with her. Were there a Mère Casimir in London, she would be living in a workhouse, strictly superintended, constantly reprimanded, and constantly, too, she would appear in the dock of the police court, and the magistrate

would say: "I don't know what to do with you. You are perfectly incorrigible." Then this headline amidst the evening newspaper police reports: "Her Seventy-Seventh Appearance. Magistrate Doesn't Know What To Do With Her. But She Gets One Month All the Same."

In Paris, however, Mère Casimir was free. A shabby old creature, bent over her tray of matches, no taller than your walking-stick. Like her amazing friend, Bibi la Purée, she rarely strayed from the Latin Quarter. Just as he spoke of himself as "Bibi," so she invariably referred to herself as "la Mère Casimir." But whereas "Bibi" had ever led a vagabond life, Mère Casimir had known luxurious times, triumphant times: times when worldlings ogled and worshipped her, as she posed on the stage of the Opera and drove out in semi-state to the Bois.

And she laughed in a feeble, cracked voice, when she described those brilliant days; and rubbed her withered, trembling old hands; and nodded and nodded her bowed, white head; and piped the first line of that haunting, melancholy refrain:

"Il était une fois."

Il était une fois. Once upon a time! But the descent from luxury to poverty had neither saddened nor hardened Mère Casimir. Deeply attached to the students and to Mesdemoiselles Musette and Mimi, she professed a greater affection for them than ever she had borne M. le Marquis or Monseigneur le Duc.

"Des idiots," she said of the latter.

"Des cœurs—real hearts," was her favourite way of describing the kindly Bohemians of the Latin Quarter.

Many years have elapsed since first I saw Mère Casimir in the Café Procope—"le café de M. de Voltaire," now, also, no more. It was one o'clock in the morning. The olive-man and the nougat-merchant had paid their last call; the flower-woman had said good-night; the next visitor was Mère Casimir. So feeble was she that she could scarcely push open the door: and when a waiter let her in, she curtsied to him, then curtsied to the customers. No one bought her matches: but she was given *bock*. Sous were collected on her behalf by a student; they were to persuade her to dance. But Mère Casimir had grown stiff with time. She could do no more than hop and curtsy, bob and bend, smile and crow, kiss and wave her withered old hand.

"Il était une fois," she protested, at the end.

"Once upon a time." Invited to seat herself at my table, Mère Casimir told me how she had shone at the Opera; how she had attended notorious, extravagant suppers and balls; how she had broken hearts; how Napoleon III. himself had noticed her; how she used to sing Béranger ditties. . . . She would sing one now . . . one of her favourites. . . . "Listen." Rising, she piped feebly again.

Ah, the Elysée! Mère Casimir compared it contemptuously to the Tuileries, and sighed.

What was a President to an Emperor? What was the Opera to-day? and the Bois? and the Jockey Club? "The vulgar Republic has changed all that," she complained. "It disgusts me—this Republic."

Suddenly the old woman became silent. Bent in half behind the table, she was scarcely visible. Minutes went by, but she remained motionless. And at last the waiter, thinking her asleep, called out:

"Eh bien, la vieille?"

Then, Mère Casimir started, and nodded her head, and rose, and thanked the customers with a last curtsy, and told them she hoped to dance to them on another occasion; and, before going out into the darkness, murmured again:

"Il était une fois."

A few nights later I met her on the Boul' Mich' whilst she was passing from table to table on the terrace of the Café d'Harcourt.

The students were kind to her; so were Mürger's daughters, Mesdemoiselles Musette and Mimi. And she was given olives and nougat, and a number of sous, and even a rose. And the waiters were friendly also; and so was the stout, black-coated proprietor.

In return, Mère Casimir sang her song and danced her dance, and was applauded and encored—even by the policeman at the corner.

At two o'clock in the morning, when the Latin Quarter cafés close, the old woman disappeared.

No one knew where she lived. But she could

be seen feebly making her way up the Boul' Mich' and, turning, to pass the Panthéon. There the streets soon become narrow and dim. Apaches and *chiffonniers* abound. One or two sinister-looking wine-shops remind one of those in the *Mystères de Paris*. Through the grimy windows, one can watch the customers, seated at rude tables within.

And once, while exploring this neighbourhood, I perceived Mère Casimir seated next to Bibi la Purée behind one of those windows; with a bottle of wine in front of them. And I entered and approached them, apologising for my intrusion.

Bibi was the host: Bibi, "the original with an amazing past," who in days gone by had been Verlaine's valet and friend: and who—after the death of the "Master"—became obsessed with an unholy passion for umbrellas; anyone's umbrellas — all umbrellas — new, middle-aged, decrepit. Bibi, tall and gaunt, with sunken cheeks, lurid green eyes, an eternal, wonderful grin, and—— But Bibi cannot be described in passing. Bibi deserves a chapter to himself, and Bibi has had that chapter elsewhere.[1]

Well, Bibi was the host, and Mère Casimir his guest. Several nights a week they met in this manner. There in the grimy wine-shop they exchanged reminiscences: Bibi, of Verlaine; Mère Casimir, of M. le Marquis and other *roués* under the Empire. There they drank sour red wine

[1] *Paris of the Parisians.*

and took pinches of snuff: Bibi provided the wine, Mère Casimir the snuff. There they chanted Béranger ditties: Bibi huskily, Mère Casimir in her feeble, cracked voice. There they were happy and at peace: an extraordinary couple.

At intervals rough-looking men slouched in and out. Whispering went on in corners. But no one heeded Bibi and Mère Casimir, and they themselves paid no attention to the dubious drinkers in the place.

"He is gay, isn't he, my Bibi?" the old woman would inquire.

"She is still young, isn't she, la Mère Casimir?" the old fellow demanded.

Then Mère Casimir laughed in her feeble, cracked voice, and rubbed her withered old hands, and nodded her bowed white head, and piped the first line of the sad refrain:

"Il était une fois."

2. Gloom on the Rive Gauche

Sometimes in the Latin Quarter come grave moments, grim and gloomy moments—moments when the students shun the cafés; when their lady friends, Mesdemoiselles Mimi and Musette—Mürger's daughters, Daughters of Bohemia—look pale and anxious, and whisper together as though alarmed; when the spectator, observing this depression, becomes himself depressed. At such a time the women whose clothes are shabby, whose faces are tragical (the faded Mimis, the Musettes of years ago) come out of those corners

to which their unattractiveness has condemned them; come out, and congregate—skeletons some of them, swollen, shapeless creatures the rest—all, considering their usual comparative obscurity, ominous. When the temper of the Quarter is blithe, they must look on forlornly from the background. No one heeds them; no one invites them to accept an olive or sip a *bock*. But when the Quarter has been horrified by some tragedy, some crime, they, on account of their memories and experiences, on account, too, of their own connection with tragedy—they, then, are sought after; they, then, talk the most; they, then, hold the longest and completest version of the matter that has brought on the gloom.

Recently, at three o'clock in the morning, I heard these shabby, solitary women chattering more ominously than usual in Madame Bertrand's hospitable milk-shop. There, after the cafés have been closed, the students assemble to devour sandwiches, *brioches*, hot rolls; but upon the occasion in question the only customers present were Mürger's elderly, unattractive daughters. And whilst sipping hot milk or coffee, and biting hungrily into a penny roll, they listened to the tale of a woman—the palest, the most wasted of this forlorn group of women, whose coat and skirt were red, whose boots were muddy, whose gloves betrayed stitching done upstairs in her dim back room.

Occasionally her narrative was interrupted by a short, sharp cough. She lost her breath;

pressed her hand to her breast; cleared her throat.

"Continue," said the others impatiently. "I continue," she replied.

And then, whilst listening also, I learnt that a certain Marcelle played the chief rôle in the story: Marcelle, blithest of Mürger's younger daughters, Marcelle the *vraie gamine,* Marcelle the lively little lady who always wore a bicycling suit, yet never bicycled; who appeared seventeen, but in reality was twenty-two; who danced down the Boul' Mich' arm-in-arm with the students—she the gayest of the party, her step the lightest, her Chinese lantern the largest; who was liked by one and all, and to whom everyone was *mon cher.* . . . Marcelle the Candid! A brunette, she took it into her head to become a blonde. "C'est chic d'être blonde," she cried: then some days later appeared on the Boul' Mich' with flaxen hair. And she drew attention to this striking metamorphosis, exclaiming: "Inspect me; stare at me! Am I not ravishing? Isn't it a success? Such a dye! Only five francs a bottle—a large bottle—also perfumed!" And drank a toast . . . "to the new colour!" And vowed that, with it, began a new era. And afterwards, when relating reminiscences, naïvely explained: "That was in the days when I was a brunette." And constantly sang, in a shrill voice, that favourite sentimental ballad, *Les Blondes.* . . . Marcelle the Sympathetic! Each student found in her a patient, a friendly listener.

She was ready to bear with chaotic, interminable narratives of jealousies, worries, woes. She would propose a drive, a long drive, in an open cab—the grievance to be unfolded on the way. "Tell the *cocher*," she would say to the student, "to choose a deserted route—so that you may rage and despair, and weep as much as you please. Open your poor heart, *mon cher*. Keep nothing back. *Allez*, you can trust Marcelle." . . . Marcelle the Sentimental, the Nature-loving! After a noisy luncheon-party in the country, she would command an adjournment to the wood. Childlike she sought for flowers, running hither and thither, uttering shrill little cries of astonishment and rapture. And lingered and lingered in the wood. And vowed she would not return to Paris before the departure of the very last train. And asked naïve questions about the moon and the stars. And murmured: "How sweet is the country, how exquisite!"—shrinking nevertheless from the bats and mosquitoes. And went to bed immediately upon reaching Paris—so as not to spoil "the impression" of the country. And dreamt happily, dreamt as she had never dreamt before—"mon cher!"

Bright Marcelle; and, in spite of her follies, admirable Marcelle! The shabby, solitary women—the faded Mimis, the Musettes of years ago—had in her a friend.

Had? . . . Had; but have no longer.

"*Murdered!*" said the woman in the red dress—huskily—in Madame Bertrand's hospitable

milk-shop, of Marcelle the Blonde. Murdered; but no matter how. Murdered; and lying in a room, round the corner, with candles burning by the death-bed.

"Tall, tall candles," continued the woman. "They burn brightly; and she is not alone. To-day I have seen her three times. There were only two wreaths this morning, but there must be more than twenty now. To-morrow the concierge will do nothing but take up wreaths."

And the woman coughed, the other women murmured; then the husky voice was heard again :—

"They have telegraphed for her brother; her parents are dead. He is a peasant. He has never been to Paris. He is twenty-three. He adored her. I have seen letters of his which called her 'ma petite sœur bien aimée.' He would have cut himself into pieces for Marcelle."

A husky, husky voice. Gestures accompanying each word, and now and again the short, sharp cough.

As the hour advanced, Madame Bertrand's stout, bearded manager (installed behind the counter) began to doze. The servant who distributed the cups of milk and coffee settled herself on a stool in the background and closed her eyes. From the coffee urns, the urns of milk, arose fumes; the urns of boiling water hissed. Past the shop, crawled a market-cart, packed thick and high with vegetables, and, on the top of the vegetables, sat a sturdy peasant woman, her

head enveloped in a handkerchief. Through the windows one might see two policemen gossiping over the way ; a vagrant limping by ; the eternal *chiffonnier*, stooping over the gutter in quest of stumps of cigars and cigarettes. Only in the milk-shop was there light, a pale, unbecoming light from the lamp overhead. Only here was there colour, the colours of the shabby women's dresses : faded blue, dingy yellow, red. Only *chez* Madame Bertrand was there a group—a group of frightened, haunted women, fifteen or so. No woman went her way. None felt strong, secure enough to endure the solitude of her dim *chambre meublée*. Perhaps they remained there until dawn. Perhaps they were still there, when the first workman passed. And no doubt he, after glancing through the windows, shrugged his shoulders and soliloquised : "There they are, the abandoned ones, making another merry night of it."

Gloom, next day. Gloom, on the day after. And greater gloom on the gloomiest day of all—the day of the funeral.

A sombre day : clouds hanging close over the Latin Quarter. A damp day ; in the air, mist. A day when the householders of a certain narrow street came to their doors ; when other residents appeared at their windows ; when spectators assembled on the kerbstone ; when a group of shabby, forlorn women stood silently beside a hearse—the shabbiest, the most wasted, a woman in red.

She had no other dress. Those in faded blue

and dingy yellow, had no other dresses. In Paris, black failing . . . "one does one's best."

The hearse had just received its light burden, and the coffin was being covered—thrice covered—with flowers: mere nosegays, bouquets, wreath after wreath. By the doorstep, stood Marcelle's concierge — a stout woman — crying. Farther away, three policemen — erect and motionless. Few students to be seen. But they had sent their tributes of affection, for the flowers continued to come—came and came—accompanied by cards and ribbons: one card bearing the inscription: "To Our Blonde Marcelle." Then, after the last flower had been laid, Mürger's young and charming daughters, Mürger's elderly and tragical daughters, gathered behind the hearse. Slowly it advanced, slowly it disappeared—the policemen saluting, the concierge weeping, the spectators removing their hats, the bourgeoise householder crossing herself, the Daughters of Mürger following immediately behind the hearse; the woman in red, still the most noticeable.

The most noticeable, perhaps, because her arm was drawn through the arm of a young man: bareheaded, dressed in a coarse black suit: red-eyed, red-eared, ungainly, uncouth: of the fields, of the earth, unmistakably, a peasant. With stooping shoulders and bowed head; stupefied, wrecked; Marcelle's peasant brother followed his "petite sœur bien aimée" to her grave—in the compassionate charge of the shabby, husky-voiced woman in red.

Across the bridge, past Notre-Dame: past theatres, banks, cafés and fine shops: past hospitals, past hovels, past drinking dens. On and on, on and on—the mourners silently and sorrowfully following Marcelle. Still on: the mourners accompanying Marcelle, once most blithe of Mürger's daughters, farther and farther from Mürger's land. Onward always, through the gloom, through the mist, to Marcelle's last destination. Then back again, through the mist, through the gloom, without Marcelle: and Marcelle the Blonde, Marcelle the *Vraie Gamine*, only a memory, only a name.

3. The Daughter of the Students

The month of July—eleven years ago. The year was one of those dear, amazing years when, in Paris, everybody has a foe, a feud and a fear; everybody a flush on his face and a gleam in his eye; everybody a little adventure with the plain police, the mounted police or the Garde Républicaine. We are on the march, on the run.

The Ministry of the moment is—well, who *is* Prime Minister this morning? Never mind his name; he is sure to be a swindler, a "bandit." Nothing but "bandits" among the public men. No purity among the public men; they have all, all "touched" money in the Panama affair. No; M. Duval is *not* an exception. He is as villainous as the rest. If you persist in your declaration that he is an exception, you must have some sinister, interested reason. *You*,

Monsieur, are no better than M. Duval. You, too, are a bandit. I say it again, bandit, bandit, bandit. Come out and fight. Come out and——

Such a tumult, such a panic in Paris! Houses searched by the police, and hundreds of suspected persons arrested. And in the midst of the panic the good Bohemians of the Latin Quarter also rise, and march with sticks and lanterns to the house of Senator Bérenger, and smash his windows, and groan, and call upon him to come out and be slain on the spot.

Unhappy Senator Bérenger, who deemed that the Quat-z-Arts ball—the great annual ball of the students—was improper!

"It was Art," shout the students.

"It was a shocking spectacle," pronounces the Senator.

"Come out and be slain," shout the students.

"Arrest them," orders the Senator. And then —O then—a revolution in the Quarter; then, the wild, terrifying "Seven Days' Bagarre."

There blaze bonfires; there, arise barricades; there, lie omnibuses overturned on the Boul' Mich'; there, march furious bands of students who charge and are charged by the police. Mercy, how we march and how we run! On the fifth day, we are bandaged, and we limp, but we resume our manifestations.

"Come out and be slain," we yell, below the Senator's window.

"Arrest them," orders the Senator. "It was Art," we almost sob, in the ear of the interviewer.

"It was a shocking spectacle," declares the Senator.

"You must, you shall be slain," we cry in frenzy. And then, in the Quarter, appears the Army; and the Army goes for us; and before such overwhelming odds, we fly; and twenty of us who fly and fly find ourselves at last, dishevelled and breathless, in a dim, deserted side street.

Not a sound; we are too much exhausted to speak.

A moon and stars, silence and peace. Twenty dishevelled and exhausted students, who sit on the kerbstone, on doorsteps, to rest. And then, all of a sudden, a Cry. A feeble, plaintive Cry from a doorstep: and on the doorstep, a bundle. Twenty exhausted, dishevelled students before the bundle; a bundle—that cries. An amazing discovery, a sensational surprise! The bundle is a Child; the bundle is a *Gosse*; the bundle is a bud of a Girl.

Twenty exhausted, dishevelled students strangely in possession of a baby; and who nurse the baby, and who seek to win her confidence, with awkward caresses, and by swinging her to and fro, and by assuring her that she is safe and sound. And, finally, twenty good Bohemians who resolve to adopt the Child, and introduce her formally to their colleagues, and proclaim her before all the good Bohemians of the Rive Gauche: "The Adopted Daughter of the Students of the Latin Quarter." But, the name, the name? The Saint for the day is Lucie: so, Lucie. The

gosse was found on the last night of the Bagarre: so, Bagarre. Thus, with the polite prefix, we get: Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre.

Does Paul buy books on the nursing of infants, or the bringing up of children? And Gaston; does he go blushing into a shop and stammer out a request for a baby's complete outfit? At all events, awkwardness and unrest in the Quarter. It is such a responsibility to have a Daughter; it is such an anxiety to attend adequately to her needs! And so, after infinite discussion, it is determined that Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre shall reside in the home of Enfants Trouvés, until the best-hearted of foster-mothers in the whole of France shall have been found.

Says Paul, gravely: "Country air is indispensable."

Says Gaston: "Milk and eggs."

Says Pierre: "Companions of her own age."

Do the good Bohemians of the Latin France go forth gravely in quest of foster-mothers? Do they pass from province to province, comparing foster-mothers, testing the milk and eggs, studying local death-rates, wondering and wondering which is the healthiest and most invigorating of the various airs? At all events, Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre is ultimately taken to a farm.

Says Paul: "Nothing better than a farm."

Says Gaston: "Fresh milk and eggs every morn."

Says Pierre: "Cows and ducks and hens to marvel at."

Says Aimery: "None of the pernicious influences and surroundings of the city."

Concludes Xavier: "We have done admirably."

Thus, the Committee; a Committee of Five, whose duty it is to deal with the foster-mother, whose privilege it is to "look after the affairs" of Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre. Always "sitting," this Committee; sitting before ledgers and ink in the Taverne Lorraine, gifts and subscriptions to be acknowledged; instructions to be sent to the foster-mother; inquiries after the health of Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre to be answered; interviewers to be received; in fine, much business in the Taverne Lorraine.

And then, all the students of the Latin Quarter have a right to demand news of Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre; for all the students are her fathers; and so, naturally enough, they are anxious to know whether she has spoken her first word, and cut her first tooth, and staggered her first step. It is well that the Committee is patient and amiable; it is fortunate that the Committee rejoices in its work; else there would be cries of: "Laissez-moi tranquille," and "Fichez-moi la paix" and "Décampe, ou je t'assomme."

Now and then, the Committee visits Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre at her farm; and on their return a general meeting is held in the Taverne Lorraine—with Paul in the chair, Paul on the health, appearance and pastimes of Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre. Paul on the foster-mother, on

the farm; Paul, also, on Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre's diet. Paul, finally, on Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre's approaching birthday. And, indeed, on each of her birthdays, the students' adopted Daughter receives gifts and an address; and on Christmas Day and New Year's Day, more gifts; and upon every visit of the Committee, a souvenir of some kind or another. Explains Paul most wisely: "Children like that."

Ah me, the responsibility, the anxiety of having a Daughter! The moment comes when she has measles and chicken-pox; and then, what dark days for the father. And Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre is no exception; Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre has chicken-pox, has measles. In the Latin Quarter, alarm and emotion. All Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre's many fathers *énervés* and agitated. All the fathers suggesting precautions and remedies. All the fathers trying to remember what their parents did when they had chicken-pox and measles. Does the Committee study books on those diseases? At all events, the Committee is in constant communication with the farm. Also, the Committee proceeds solemnly to the farm. The telegram to Paris: "No complications. Malady following its ordinary course." Another telegram: "Think it wiser to remain the night." A third telegram: "Good night. Took nourishment this morning." And in the *Etudiant* and the *Cri du Quartier*, the brilliant organs of the Quarter, the announcement in large type: "We rejoice to announce that the

adopted Daughter of the students of the Latin Quarter is now allowed to take air in her garden. To all her fathers she returns her warmest thanks for their sympathy, messages and offerings. But the quite unusual number of her fathers render it impossible to thank each one of them individually." Follows Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre's signature, the scrawling letters, L. B., faithfully reproduced. Says Paul: "I gave her a pencil-box. Children adore that."

However, four years have elapsed since Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre pained her many dear fathers by having chicken-pox. To-day, she has turned eleven, but she still resides far away from "the pernicious influences and surroundings of the city."

Says Paul: "Country air is still indispensable."

Says Gaston: "Always milk and eggs."

Says Pierre: "Honest folk about her."

Down to the farm goes the Committee: and back comes the Committee with the report that Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre can now dive her hand into the pockets of the Committee's dear corduroy waistcoat. She has grown; she is almost a *jeune fille.* How, by the way, stands her banking account? Well: but since the occasion for increasing it now presents itself, let the occasion be used to the utmost. The fête of Mi-Carême: the proceeds of the fête to be set aside for "la fille adoptive des étudiants, la petite Lucie Bagarre." A grand *bal masqué* at Bullier's.

Says Paul: "In order to attract the public, we must be amazing." All the fathers scheming how to be amazing. All the fathers painting themselves and donning fantastic costumes. All the fathers calling upon Paris to swell their fund by visiting Bullier's. And Paris responds: Paris flocks to Bullier's.

An amazing spectacle, and an amazing night: the good Bohemians have succeeded in being entirely amazing. Bullier's packed; Bullier's all light, all colour, all movement, when the Committee of Five proudly surveys the scene.

Says Paul: "Gold."

Says Gaston: "Bank-notes."

Says Pierre: "A dot."

Says Aimery: "A fortune."

Says Xavier: "A veritable heiress."

Say the innumerable fathers: "The *richissime* Mademoiselle Lucie Bagarre."

And then, toasts. And then, cheers.

And then, the resolution that an address, signed by all her fathers, shall be presented to their dear adopted Daughter: who, at this advanced noisy hour, is lying fast asleep in her farm.

VIII

MONSIEUR LE ROUÉ

WONDERFUL, O most wonderful M. le Roué—who could fail to admire him for the constant, anxious endeavours he makes, the innumerable secret devices he employs to appear juvenile and sprightly! That his figure may be elegant, he wears stays. That the crow's feet may not be conspicuous he (or rather his valet) covers them over with a subtle, greasy preparation. That his moustache may not droop, he has it waxed to the extremest degree of rigidity. And that people may not say: "Old le Roué is a wreck" and "Old le Roué is played out," he goes about the Amazing City—here, there and everywhere—with a glass in his eye and a flower in his button-hole, like the gayest of young worldlings.

However, it has to be recorded that despite all his endeavours, despite all his artifices, M. le Roué remains a shaky, shrunken old fellow, with scanty white hair, a tired, pallid face and a thin, feeble voice. Once upon a time—say forty years ago—he was deemed one of the most brilliant, the most irresistible ornaments of *le Tout Paris*; but to-day—forty years after—he has attained that tragic period in the life of a vain, superannuated *viveur*,

when no one, except his valet, is permitted to see him until two o'clock in the afternoon; and thus no one, save that faithful attendant, could give us a picture of M. le Roué when, after the curtains have been drawn and daylight has been let into the room, the old gentleman is served with his cup of chocolate and morsel of dry toast.

Still, if we cannot witness his awakening, we may assuredly assume that M. le Roué is not a pleasant spectacle in the morning. And it is equally safe to suppose that his temper is detestable, his language deplorable, when the valet shaves his wan cheek, and fastens his stays, and helps him into his heavy fur coat; and thus, in a word, turns him into the impeccable if rickety old beau who lunches every day on the stroke of two o'clock in Sucré's white-and-gold restaurant.

"Monsieur se porte bien?" inquires the *maître d'hôtel*, respectfully handing him the menu.

"Pas mal, pas mal," replies M. le Roué, in his thin, feeble voice. And although the old gentleman has been advised to keep strictly to a diet of plain foods and Vichy water, both the dishes and the wines that he orders are elaborate and rich.

Once again I exclaim: "Wonderful, O most wonderful M. le Roué," and once again I demand: "Who could fail to admire him?"

He declines to belong to the past, he refuses to go into retirement; so long as he can stand up in his stays he is heroically determined to lead the life of a *viveur*, a rake. See him, here in

Sucré's restaurant, revelling over his lobster; behold him kissing his trembling, white hand to the lady book-keeper, a handsome young woman with sparkling diamond earrings; and hear him, moreover, entertaining Joseph, the *maître d'hôtel*, with an account of the lively supper-party he presided over last night, at which Mesdemoiselles Liane de Luneville and Marguerite de Millefleurs (beautiful, brilliant ornaments of the *demi-monde*) were present, and Mademoiselle Pauline Boum, of the Casino de Paris, performed her latest "eccentric" dance.

All this from a gentleman half-way through the seventies! All this from a shaky, shrunken old fellow who ought, at the present moment, to be taking a careful constitutional in the Parc Monceau on the arm of some mild, elderly female relative—instead of rejoicing over lobster and Château-Yquem in Sucré's white-and-gold restaurant.

"Monsieur is extraordinary," says the *maître d'hôtel*, by way of flattery.

"Monsieur is a monster," says the handsome lady book-keeper, shaking her diamond earrings.

And old le Roué the "Extraordinary," old le Roué "the Monster," smiles, winks a dim eye and laughs. But it has to be stated that his smile is a leer and that his laugh is a cackle.

From Sucré's restaurant M. le Roué proceeds slowly, leaning heavily on his walking-stick, to a quiet, comfortable café, where he meets another heroic old rake—the Marquis de Mô.

But there is this striking difference between the two: whereas old le Roué is delicately made, frail, shrunken, old de Mô is enormous, apoplectic, with flowing white whiskers, a round, bumpy bald head, a fiery complexion and a huge gouty foot which is ever encased in a wonderful elastic shoe. Le Roué and de Mô rejoiced extravagantly together in the latter brilliant days of the Second Empire. And to-day, in the year of 1912, they love to recall their past conquests, duels, follies, and never tire of abusing the Republican régime.

"What a Government, what an age!" complains le Roué.

"Abominable—odious—sinister," declares de Mô.

Also, our superannuated *viveurs* recall affectionate memories of a dear, mutual friend, the late Comte Robert de Barsac, who died last year, of a vague illness, shortly after he had riotously celebrated his seventieth birthday. The truth was, old de Barsac could not keep pace with old le Roué and old de Mô. His face became leaden in colour and his speech rambling and incoherent. And one night, he suddenly passed away in his sleep from exhaustion.

"Ce pauvre cher Robert!" exclaims le Roué sadly. "Ce pauvre cher Robert!" sighs de Mô.

Then there is another old friend, still living, of whom le Roué and de Mô speak affectionately as they sit together in their corner of the quiet, comfortable café.

She is "Madeline"—who, once upon a time, was

the "star" actress at the Variétés theatre. In truth, Marguerite de Prèsles (as she figured on the bills) was something of a queen: the queen of the half-world. The newspapers of that period, in alluding to her wit, beauty and charm, called her the "exquisite Madeline"; the "adorable Madeline"; the "incomparable" Madeline de Prèsles. Le Roué and de Mô worshipped at her shrine. And to-day—forty years after—they often visit her at Pichon's gaudy night restaurant: where the "adorable" Variétés actress of years ago makes constant rounds of the place—with tinselled boxes of chocolates and a basket of flowers!

Yes; "Madeline" sells chocolates and flowers *chez* Pichon! And the gold hair has turned white and the slim figure has swollen, and the once pretty, bejewelled little hands have become knotted and coarse; and the old lady herself—the former radiant "star" of the Variétés—lives in a sombre *hôtel meublé* on the outskirts of Paris, where she passes most of the day in making up bouquets and button-holes for the painted, rackety company that assembles nightly at Pichon's.

Thus some romance is left in old le Roué and old de Mô. They still seek out "Madeline." They make her presents on New Year's Day; nor do they ever fail to remember her birthday. Once they offered her an annuity—but whilst expressing her thanks and declaring herself "touched," she assured her old admirers that she was content with the income she derived

from her speculations in flowers and chocolates: although (so she added) she held but a scornful opinion of the modern young worldlings—the young worldlings of the "odious," "sinister" Republic—who were her customers *chez* Pichon. And so, attached, by force of memories and by reason of their long, constant gallantry, so attached is "Madeline" to old le Roué, and old de Mô, that when those two valiant old rakes are seized with rheumatism or gout, and are obliged most unwillingly and angrily to lie up, she pays them daily visits; and refreshes and embellishes their rooms with her flowers; and reminds them vivaciously and wittily of the epoch—the wonderful epoch—when all three of them were gay, brilliant ornaments of the Amazing City. . . .

And now, night-time.

Behold M. le Roué dining royally, and haunting the *coulisses* of the Opera, and playing baccarat, with trembling hands, in the Cercle Doré, and entertaining (as we have already recorded) Mesdemoiselles Liane de Luneville and Marguerite de Millefleurs, and the eccentric Mademoiselle Pauline Boum, to supper in a gilded, bemirrored *cabinet particulier.*

All this he does long after the innumerable electric advertising devices (Fontain's Perfumes—Carré's Gloves—Cherry Brandy of the Maison Joyeux et Fils) have begun to blink and dance on the boulevards; and long after M. le Roué, with his five and seventy years, should have been

tucked up in bed—his old brain at rest and his old head enveloped in a night-cap.

But M. le Roué declines to return home, M. le Roué refuses to close his dim eyes, until he has visited one of those modern rackety "American" bars—the "High Life," for instance—where the young worldlings of to-day sit upon high stools, and absorb cocktails, *crème de menthe* and icy "sherry-cobblers." And it is wonderful to witness frail, shaky M. le Roué climb up on to his stool; and the spectacle becomes still more wonderful when apoplectic, gouty old de Mô laboriously follows his example.

Thus M. le Roué goes to the "High Life," goes here, there and everywhere, like the gayest and most adventurous of young worldlings. And wherever he goes, the waiters and attendants exclaim: "Monsieur is astonishing!" and "Monsieur is extraordinary!" and their flattery pleases the old gentleman.

"Pas mal, pas mal," he replies in his thin, feeble voice, and with his leer.

However, there come times when M. le Roué is particularly shaky and shrunken, when he looks peculiarly superannuated and frail; and at these times he resents the obsequious compliments of the waiters.

"No, no," he cries shrilly. "I am a very old man, and I am feeling very weak and very ill." After which confession, he buries his head in his trembling, white hands, and mutters to himself, strangely, beneath his breath.

The waiters then look at him curiously. And old de Mô protests: "What nonsense, *mon ami*; what folly, *mon vieux*. There is nothing the matter with you. You are perfectly well."

But old de Mô's expression is nevertheless anxious.

Is he about to lose his last remaining companion of years ago? Is he shortly to sit in that corner of the quiet, comfortable café—alone?

He cannot but acknowledge to himself that in old le Roué's face there is the same leaden colour and in old le Roué's speech the same incoherency that manifested themselves in their mutual dear friend and contemporary, the late Comte Robert de Barsac, a short while before he vaguely passed away.

IX

FRENCH LIFE AND THE FRENCH STAGE

1. M. Paul Bourget, the Reactionary Playwright, and M. Pataud, who put out the Lights of Paris

IN a boulevard café, over his favourite, strange mixture of strawberry syrup and champagne, a well-known Paris journalist recently called my attention to the profusion of playwrights of high, indisputable ability now writing for the French stage.

"There are not enough theatres to accommodate them all," he said. "The papers inform us that X—— has just finished a new *chef-d'œuvre*, but often four, six, even ten months will elapse ere the masterpiece can be produced. Why? Because there is no room for X—— He must wait his turn; and in his leisure—O admirable fertility—he writes yet another play."

"Nevertheless you have three important *répétitions générales* this week," I remarked. "Capus to-morrow, Donnay at the Français on Wednesday, and de Flers and Caillavet, the Inexhaustible, on Friday."

"Charming Capus, delightful Donnay, amazing de Flers and Caillavet," exclaimed my companion. "Listen; we are free for an hour. Let us run over

the names of our leading playwrights—a formidable list. Garçon, another glass"—and away went the waiter in quest of more syrup and champagne.

Of course, no mere "running over" of the great name of Rostand. Both of us soon found ourselves reciting passages from *Cyrano*, *Chantecler*, *La Princesse Lointaine*—my friend eloquently and emotionally, myself alas! with the natural embarrassment and self-consciousness of the foreigner. "Au trot, au galop," said my companion, glancing at the clock. And rapidly we proceeded to review the "formidable list" of France's leading dramatists:—Paul Hervieu, the cultured, polished author of *Le Dédale* and *La Course au Flambeau*. Violent, destructive Henri Bernstein—*La Griffe*, *La Rafale*, *Samson*. Henri Lavedan, brilliantly audacious in *Le Nouveau Jeu*, delightfully ironical in the *Marquis de Priola*, but serious, profound (a veritable *tour de force*) in *Le Duel*. Then Capus, the tolerant, the sympathetic: *Nôtre Jeunesse*, *Les Passagères*, *Monsieur Piégois*. Emile Fabre, wonderful manipulator of stage "crowds," *Les Ventres Dorés*. Lively, brilliant de Flers and Caillavet, *Le Roi*, *L'Ane de Buridan*, *L'Amour Veille*. Worldly, cynical Abel Hermant, *Les Transatlantiques*, *Monsieur de Courpière*. Jules Lemaître, tender in *La Massière*, tragical in *Bertrad*. Brieux: the amusing *Hannetons*, sombre, harrowing *Maternité*. Georges Porto-Riche, *L'Amoureuse*, perhaps the finest modern comedy in the repertoire of the French National Theatre. Sound admirable Donnay,

Amants, *Le Retour de Jérusalem.* Anatole France, the incomparable *Crainquebille.* MM. Arquillière and Bernède, with their masterly pictures of military life, *La Grande Famille*, *Sous l'Epaulette.* Romantic, vigorous Jean Richepin, *Le Chemineau.* Sardonic, anarchical Octave Mirbeau, *Les Affaires sont les Affaires*, *Le Foyer.* Humane, chivalrous Pierre Wolff, *L'Age d'Aimer* and *Le Ruisseau.* Georges Ancey, earnest investigator into the hidden crafty practices of the Catholic Church, *Ces Messieurs.* Gentle, elegant Romain Coolus, *L'Enfant chérie* and *Une Femme Passa.* Grim, lurid André de Lorde of the Grand Guignol. Ardent, passionate Henri Bataille, *Un Scandale*, *La Vierge Folle*, *La Femme Nue.*

"Formidable, formidable!" exclaimed our Paris journalist, wiping his brow.

"There remains M. Paul Bourget," I said.

"M. Paul Bourget is ponderous, prejudiced, pedantic," objected my companion. "I have just seen his latest photograph, which shows him seated at his writing-desk in a frock coat. Novels of life in the Faubourg St Germain, such as M. Bourget has produced, may possibly be written in a frock coat—*not* plays."

"No doubt the coat was only put on for the visit of the photographer," I charitably suggested.

"M. Paul Bourget's plays convey the impression—no, the conviction—that they were written in the conventional, cramped armour of a frock coat," was the solemn, categorical retort.

Now for M. Bourget, on his side it would be

permissible to object that a gentleman who takes thick strawberry syrup in his champagne commits no less of an enormity than the dramatist who writes his plays in a frock coat; and that therefore, he, M. Bourget, considers himself untouched by the allegations directed against him from that hostile and eccentric quarter. Nevertheless, an examination of M. Bourget's dramatic work—*Un Divorce*, *L'Emigré*, *La Barricade*—compels the comparison that whereas his fellow-playwrights adopt the theatre exclusively as a sphere in which to hold up a vivid, faithful, scrupulously impartial picture of scenes from actual life—*la vie vivante*—M. Bourget uses the stage, ponderously, as a platform or a pulpit. His views on social questions—the dominant ideas, the passions of the hour—are well known. They are autocratic, severe: in the French sense of the word, "correct." But it unfortunately happens that *l'homme correct* possesses none of those indispensable attributes required of the playwright—an open mind, imagination, a sense of humour. A firm clerical and the irreconcilable antagonist of divorce, M. Bourget naturally maintains that in a spiritual emergency, women, as well as men, are more efficaciously helped to right conduct by priestly government than by habits of self-reliance. Then his sympathies have ever rested undisguisedly with the classes he has portrayed in his novels—the languid worldling of the Faubourg St Germain, the *haute bourgeoisie*, the despotic *châtelain*.

"M. Bourget is not interested in humble people. The vicissitudes, the amours, the miseries of the lower classes, he deems beneath his notice. He concerns himself only with the emotions of the elegant and the rich," bitter, sardonic M. Octave Mirbeau makes one of his characters remark. And, truly enough, it has to be affirmed that however hard he may have tried to repress his aristocratic proclivities and prejudices when writing for the stage, the author of *Un Divorce* and *La Barricade* has remained, despite his endeavours, *l'homme autoritaire, l'homme correct.*

"Je ne connais pas des idées généreuses," he has announced. "Je ne connais que des idées vraies ou fausses, et il ne vaudrait pas la peine d'écrire si ce n'était pas pour énoncer les idées que l'on croit et que l'on sait vraies." And in the press, in conferences, in prefaces, the "eminent Academician" (as the clerical *Gaulois* monotonously designates M. Bourget) has furthermore declared that *Un Divorce* and *La Barricade* were written in a rigorously impartial spirit. But other critics maintain that the controversies that have raged around M. Bourget's dramatic efforts (started with no little pretentiousness by the author himself) establish nothing. The plays speak for themselves.

M. Bourget's observations have persuaded him that the rebellious spirit prevailing amongst the working classes is a menace to his country :

"C'est cette sensation du danger présent que j'aurais voulu donner dans *La Barricade* sûr, si

j'avais pu y réussir, d'avoir servi utilement ma classe, et par conséquent mon pays."

But according to M. Pataud, the notorious ex-Secretary of the Syndicate of Electricians, M. Bourget carried away with him a totally false impression of the men and places he professes so closely, and also so impartially, to have studied.

A word about M. Pataud. It was shortly after he had ordered the Electricians' strike that plunged Paris almost into darkness for two hours,[1] and at the zenith of his fame, that the "Roi de la Lumière" attended a performance of *La Barricade* at the Vaudeville Theatre. It had been reported that he had served M. Bourget as a model for the character of Thubuef, the professional agitator in the play. This, M. Bourget emphatically denied. "Let me see for myself," said M. Pataud. And he requested M. Bourget to send him a ticket of admission to the theatre, and humorously offered to return the compliment by placing a seat in the Bourse du Travail at the dramatist's disposal.

Well, M. Bourget granted the request: but ignored the invitation to the Labour Exchange. And one night "King Pataud" seated himself, amidst *le Tout Paris* in the most fashionable of the boulevard theatres. He himself, in spite of his pink shirt, red tie, and "bowler" hat, belonged in a sense to *le Tout Paris*. Was he not "Le Roi de la Lumière"? There were columns about him in the newspapers; he was "impersonated"

[1] See page 69.

in every music-hall *revue*, and his picture post cards sold by the thousand. Then, pressing (and sentimental) requests for his autograph; invitations out to dinner and gifts of cigarettes and cigars; and what a stir, what excited cries of "There goes Pataud," when the great man swaggered down the boulevards with a fine Havana stuck in a corner of his mouth, and the "bowler" hat tilted rakishly over the right eye!

Nor in the Vaudeville Theatre was his triumph less complete. The interest of the brilliant audience was centred on "Fauteuil No. 159"; not on the stage. There sat the man who had but to give the signal and—out would go the lights! So was every opera-glass levelled at him, and so—at the end of the performance—were all the reporters in Paris eager to obtain "King" Pataud's impressions of the play. "Not bad," he was reported to have said. "But M. Bourget's conception of how strikes are conducted is ridiculous. And his strikers are equally absurd."

I fancy M. Bourget must have regretted that gift of "Fauteuil No. 159" at the time. But to-day he has his revenge—for it was the free seat in the Vaudeville Theatre that led to "King" Pataud's downfall! After the agitator's visit to *La Barricade* it became the fashion amongst the managers to invite the "Roi de la Lumière" to their theatres. Behold him, actually, at the first performance of *Chantecler*—and at the Gymnase, the Variétés, the Palais Royal. But if the public rejoiced over "King" Pataud's

presence at the theatre, his colleagues in the labour world were to be heard grumbling. Pataud (and it was true) was "getting his head turned." Pataud was neglecting the Bourse du Travail for theatres and brilliant restaurants. But the "Roi de la Lumière" paid no heed to these reproofs, nor to complaints and warnings vigorously expressed. And the crisis came, the storm burst, when "King" Pataud and an electrician came to blows on the boulevards, and were marched off to the police station on a charge of breaking the peace. At the station, the "Roi de la Lumière" was searched. "Ah, you do yourself well, you enjoy life, you have a gay time of it," grinned the *police commissaire*, after examining the agitator's pocket-book. It contained bank-notes for a large sum, receipted bills from luxurious restaurants and hotels, and (what of course, particularly delighted the Parisian) the autographed photograph of a certain very blonde and very lively actress. So, indignation and disgust of the Syndicate of Electricians, who had contributed to their secretary's support. He was called upon to resign. And to-day M. Pataud is an agent for a champagne firm; and the street *gamins* who once cheered him, now—O supreme insult—apostrophise him as "sale bourgeois."

Two questions remain for those whose opinion in the Amazing City counts. The first is: Does an Eminent Academician, who, whether he writes in a frock coat or no, professes the conviction that it would not be worth while to produce plays *only*

to reveal the influence and power of men's emotions, passions and ideals in the shaping of life, unless one had some ulterior clerical, social or political object to serve, stand in the hopeful ways of thought that distinguish the first order of Dramatists? The answer to the question is delivered with an emphatic decision. "Mais—Non"—"Mais,"—a pause and a gesture by an emphatic falling hand—"Non." Second question: Is a social agitator, who displays himself in a pink shirt and bowler hat in the best seats of fashionable theatres, and who enjoys himself at fashionable restaurants with worldlings—whom he affects to terrorise—a satisfactory Democrat? Same answer, but the "Non" and the confirmatory gesture is more emphatic. "Mais—Non."

2. M. Alfred Capus. "Nôtre Jeunesse" at the Française

Through a novel published some years ago, under the title of *Qui Perd Gagne*, I made the acquaintance of a number of Parisians who committed all manner of faults and follies, got into all kinds of dilemmas; and yet compelled a certain sympathy by reason of their good-heartedness and good humour. Never a dull moment in this novel; never, indeed, a moment when there was not some anxious situation to face, some formidable difficulty to overcome. The leading personages were a retired *blanchisseuse* and her husband. Their names I cannot recall—let them be christened the Belons; and let it be

admitted that the atmosphere in which they lived would most assuredly be condemned by the orthodox English critic as "unsavoury." Laid bare before us in all its tawdriness, all its feverishness, all its swift delirious ups and downs, was the life of the adventurer. A good round dozen of these gentlemen, but the most "enterprising," the most audacious, the most entertaining amongst them was our friend Belon, who, before becoming the husband of the *blanchisseuse*, and the master of the money realised by the sale of the *blanchisserie*, had been a seedy figure in shady newspaper offices and suspicious gambling clubs. In his unmarried days Belon rejoiced when a bet at baccarat, or a successful operation in the line of canvassing for advertisements, yielded him a louis. He was always "hard up"—always (as he described it) in a "crisis"—but adversity neither disheartened him nor turned his temper.

"Times will change," predicted Belon, when he surveyed his shabby form in the mirror of a café.

"One of these days you will dine magnificently at Paillard's," Belon murmured, when he issued forth (his hunger still unsatisfied) from a greasy restaurant.

"Paris," he soliloquised, as he swaggered along the boulevards, with a shocking little black cigar in the corner of his mouth, and his hat tilted rakishly on one side, "Paris, I know you well—know your weaknesses, your failings, your vanities. And with this precious knowledge to assist me, I shall undoubtedly succeed."

Certainly, Belon knew Paris thoroughly—or part of it. He was full of anecdote and scandal. He had amazing stories to tell of personages high up in the *grande monde*, the *monde d'affaires*, and the *demi-monde*, and he told them well. He could be gallant—in a way. Also, when it served his purpose, he could feign a seriousness that inspired confidence. And it was his gaiety, his gallantry, his flashy worldliness, that fascinated the *blanchisseuse*—not a foolish woman by any means, but a practical, amiable soul, still in her thirties, still attractive, still (as the French novelist has it) "*appétisante*," who saw in her marriage to Belon not only a means of escape from the steamy, stifling atmosphere of her laundry, but a position of importance, even of luxury and brilliancy. Belon she believed capable of great things; Belon, with his enterprise, his audacity, his knowledge of the world, needed only a small capital, such as the sale of the laundry would provide, to become a master of *affaires*, and a leader of men. And then — was not Belon fascinating, and ardent, and tender? Thus, half prosaically, half sentimentally, did the *blanchisseuse* consider Belon's eloquently worded proposal; and the result of her deliberations was good-bye to the *blanchisserie*. Affectionately she embraced, liberally she rewarded, Charlotte and Amélie, her assistants. Charlotte and Amélie wept. The future Madame Belon wept. Belon himself was moved to tears by the scene.

"Adieu, mes filles," sobbed the future Madame Belon.

"Adieu, Madame," sobbed back Charlotte and Amélie.

"Allons-nous-en, allons-nous-en," said Belon huskily. And so—in this touching fashion—farewell to the *blanchisserie.*

What changes, when next we beheld the Belons! Madame dressed attractively; and Monsieur, when he went a-gambling, was an ornament of brilliant, if not exclusive, clubs, and a power in busy, handsome newspaper offices. There were, as Belon prophesied, "magnificent dinners" at Paillard's. There were constant visits to race-courses, theatres and music-halls, and he played high, and he conceived colossal "business" schemes, and he mixed familiarly with personages high up in the *monde d'affaires*, and in the *demi-monde*; one even had *des relations* with certain personages in the veritable *monde.* But the reader, as he followed Belon et Cie here, there and everywhere, still found himself in a whirl of adventurers, and the adventurers (despite their display) were still surrounded by difficulties. For Belon was too audacious, too "enterprising." Wonderfully ingenious were his schemes, but their fate was disastrous.

In a word, Belon, with all his knowledge of Paris, overestimated the credulity of the Parisians, and was brought face to face with that unimaginative, relentless personage, the Commissaire de Police. Happier had been Madame Belon in the

steamy days of the *blanchisserie*; happier had been Belon when he surveyed his shabby form in the café mirror, saying: "Times will change." In the Belon *ménage*, not only a constant dread of M. le Commissaire de Police, but bitter, domestic quarrels, even infidelities. But the quarrels were "made up," the infidelities were pardoned—for, as the troubles thickened, as the situation grew increasingly alarming, so did the Belons become drawn closely together; so did they display many, yes, admirable, yes—even heroic qualities. And when at last the "crisis" arrived, and when the practical, amiable, retired *blanchisseuse* saved her husband from a disgraceful fate, it was the good heart and good humour that had lived through, and survived, these difficulties which made the point—the very un-English moral—of the story! Thus, after discussing their short, stormy married career in every detail, and with the utmost candour, the Belons agreed that no great harm had been done, since they were better friends than ever! But Paris had become distasteful to them; what a blithe, refreshing change, then, to take up their abode in a quiet villa on the outskirts of the city! A little villa with a porch! A little villa with a garden! A little villa where one would be entirely *chez soi*. "We will plant cabbages," cried Madame Belon enthusiastically. "We will be happy," responded Belon, with emotion. So, another and a final change of scene. Behold—as a last tableau—the Belons installed tranquilly,

comfortably and affectionately on the outskirts of Paris in a neat, innocent little villa.

Thus, very briefly, the story of *Qui Perd Gagne.* The author, I need scarcely say, was M. Alfred Capus; for who but that inimitable dramatist would have discovered good-heartedness and good humour as underlying qualities in such shady people as the Belons; and who but that genius at clearing up awkward, anxious situations could have got the retired *blanchisseuse* and her husband so generously and unexpectedly out of their moral, as well as their practical, scrapes?

Thus, a good many years ago, M. Capus, then a comparatively unknown journalist, already possessed those qualities which have made him by far the most popular playwright of to-day: a wonderful tolerance, a wonderful bonhomie, and a wonderful and incomparable talent at finding a way of carrying the treasure of faith in human goodness safely through perilous circumstances! As a consequence of these qualities M. Capus has been called an "optimist." We are always and always hearing of the "optimism" of M. Capus; but if I may be permitted to differ from the vast majority of his admirers, I would suggest that, so far from being an optimist, M. Capus is, from the ideal point of view, a cynic. True, an amiable cynic. He regards mankind with a smile—not of mockery, because there is nothing unkind in it; a smile of raillery at the idealist's effort to take the mote out of his brother's eye and to afflict himself too seriously in his endeavour to get rid

of the beam out of his own eye. From the point of view of M. Capus, motes and beams, big faults as well as little ones, belong to human nature. It is a pity, but it cannot be helped. "C'est la vie"—and so let us make the best of it.

And it might be worse! Mankind might be cruel, whereas the average man, the average woman, is kind—the hearts of average men and women are in the right place. Thus, let mankind not be judged too harshly. Since we are what we are, it is inevitable we should commit follies. But let us see to it that our hearts *are* in the right place, and when the moment arrives we shall know how to make atonement for those follies and pass on undisgraced. "Amusez-vous bien, soyez gais; mais soyez bons." Such might be M. Capus' message to mankind; and that message, indeed, he has delivered from the stage. For amongst French playwrights who bring home to us vividly, by means of illustration, French ways of feeling and methods of judgment that are not English methods, M. Alfred Capus stands out as the efficient interpreter of the typical personage recognised by general consent in France as "l'homme qui est foncièrement bon."

Do not, however, let us suppose that we are in any way helped to a correct understanding of this personage by makers of dictionaries, who tell us that "l'homme qui est foncièrement bon" is a "thoroughly good man." No. If we leave the thoroughly bad man out of account, no two more opposite types of human character can be com-

pared with one another—no two worthy men can be brought together more certain to quarrel, and mutually to dislike and condemn each other than the "thoroughly good man," approved by the English standard, and "l'homme qui est foncièrement bon," recognised as such by general consent in France. Nor is this all. Not only have we here two worthy human beings who, by reason of the different directions wherein the special worthiness of each of them displays itself, cannot agree as friends, but for the services of friendship also their qualifications are so different that upon the occasions when one can help us the other will get us into trouble; and in the moods when we should cleave to the one, we should indubitably avoid the other. The cause of this essential difference is not entirely explained when the fact is stated that righteousness constitutes the predominant characteristic of goodness in England, and kindliness the predominant characteristic in France, because the Englishman is kind also—in his own way. In other words, his righteousness *does* exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, and the Frenchman who is *foncièrement bon* has virtues also of his own; he has not merely the good nature of the easy-going publican. What these special virtues really are, and how, whilst they do not make "l'homme qui est foncièrement bon" a "thoroughly good man," in the English sense of the term, they do make him a lovable and sympathetic human character, one can discover by passing an evening in the society of

Chartier, Lucien Briant, Hélène and Laure of *Nôtre Jeunesse*, Monsieur Piégois of the delightful comedy of that name, and Montferrand — the amazing Deputy Montferrand—of *L'Attentat.*

The bonhomie of M. Capus represents a life philosophy as well as a dramatic method, that might not be applied with equal success to British institutions. But used among French social conditions, it demonstrates how neglect of logic, and force of good feeling, may help an intelligent and a humane people to render faulty systems habitable, and make good nature serve as a substitute for, and even as a corrective of, a rigid, an unheroic, an unchristian worship of "respectability" at the expense of human kindness—that is to say, a form of respectability which does not necessarily mean a very ardent love of virtue.

The characters of *Nôtre Jeunesse* are essentially French. Take Chartier, for instance, the *bonhomme philosophe par excellence.* Chartier, at forty years of age, amused by his own past; tranquil as to the future; well satisfied, in the present, to make the best of his life upon a moderate income—the quarter of a once handsome fortune, considerately left him by a former mistress, the then famous "Pervenche," who, after she had cost him a million and a half, herself broke off their *liaison,* in the amiable and reasonable fashion related by the Forsaken One himself thus:

Chartier. One evening she said to me: "*Mon chéri,* I have been looking into things. You have spent upon me three-fourths of your fortune. It is as much as any woman should

expect from any gallant man. I am contented; and grateful to you. I have come across a man who is in love with me; and I am going to be married to him." . . . She married an employé at the Louvre. It is an excellent *ménage*.

Take Laure de Roine, Chartier's sister, the good genius of the play—bonhomie, not only personified, but idealised, invested with all the liveliness and fascination that belong to delightful French womanhood. Laure, some years older than her brother, left a widow, also with a quarter of her handsome wedding portion, remaining through the opportune decease, in the very hour when he seemed bent upon ruining her, after himself, of a husband given to gambling on the Stock Exchange.

Take Madame Hélène Briant, the very charming, vivacious wife of M. Lucien Briant, a lady approaching the perilous age—*i.e.* nearly thirty—reasonably attached to, but not passionately in love with, an amiable but despondent husband, who has become despondent under the authoritative rule of M. Briant *père*, a superior man, and master of the "correct," frock-coated attitude towards life. Briant *père* is the tyrant of the Briant household. Hear the charming Hélène in active revolt against this insupportable father-in-law, and her husband's despondency, as a result of his filial docility, exposing her own case, half playfully, half seriously, to Laure de Roine, everyone's good genius:

Hélène. When I try to react against this general depression; when, in spite of them both, I make it my task to find something cheerful, and worth taking pleasure in, I find myself treated

by both Father and Son as a frivolous worldling. Add on to that that I have no children, and live in this deadly provincial atmosphere, full of spiteful gossip, scandal, and vanity. And then try, if you can, to imagine my condition of mind—not forgetting that I am an "honest" woman—and that I am beginning to realise it.

Laure. And when a woman begins to realise that she is "honest"——

Hélène. Yes; the case is grave.

All these personages explain themselves to us, and claim us, by reason of their vivid humanity, as intimate acquaintances, in the play. Yet not one of them has his or her exact counterpart in English society, for the simple reason that their choice qualities, and entertaining defects, not only belong to the French temperament but are the result of manners, conventions, prejudices and sentiments that do not enter into our actual experiences, although we are in a position to judge, or at any rate correctly to appreciate them, when we have studied them in this dramatic picture. . . .

And now for the situation of the play. It is also essentially French; what the orthodox English critic would probably describe as "disagreeable" and "painful." But with that neither M. Capus nor ourselves are concerned. Our playwright, true to the canons of his art, has aimed at no more than selecting an episode from *la vie vivante*, and revealing it in its most vital and human moments, and the episode he has chosen is one that has its counterpart, year in, year out, in the gay, irresponsible land peopled by the *jeunesse* of Paris and the provinces.

"Nôtre Jeunesse"—that period, in France particularly, of extravagances and follies; "Nôtre Jeunesse"—those years in the Latin Quarter when irregularity of conduct does not appear reprehensible even to the parental eye.

"C'est de leur âge," says the bourgeois indulgently, thinking, no doubt, of his own *jeunesse*, when he meets a band of students rejoicing riotously in their corduroy clothes, long, flowing capes and amazing hats. And such wild figures were Chartier and Lucien Briant some twenty years before we meet them. And it is of those days that they are speaking, when M. Capus introduces them to his audience in the Chartier Villa at Trouville. Chartier, of course, is in excellent spirits. But Lucien is nervous and despondent, and becomes still more troubled when his friend reminds him of his *liaison* with Léontine Gilard, a charming and light-hearted girl, whose pet name Chartier forgets.

Lucien helps his memory; the name was "Loulou." Let me quote the passage:

Lucien [*with emotion*]. Loulou.

Chartier. That's it! I can see Loulou now: fair hair, blue eyes, very pretty hands. You made a charming couple, the two of you! Well—there you have a memory which shouldn't be disagreeable, surely.

Lucien. Ah, *mon ami*, one never knows the end of adventures of that sort!

Chartier. The end? Why didn't the thing end naturally?

Lucien. What do you mean by ending naturally?

Chartier. When you left the Latin Quarter, you made Loulou a handsome present? She took another lover? or, perhaps, she got married? To-day, if you met each other in the street,

you wouldn't recognise each other? That is what I call a natural ending.

Lucien. Yes; that is the way things happen with *you*, and with almost everybody. But not with *me*. I ask myself, What may not still come of it?

Lucien's forebodings are prophetic. Soon after, Chartier is told by his sister Laure that a young girl (*très jolie, très convenable*) has called to see him. It turns out that the young girl visitor (*très jolie, très convenable*) is *Lucienne*. In other words, *she* is the visible and terrifying proof of the unlucky Lucien Briant's conviction that he is not to be permitted, like other men, to bury under the flowers of sentimental memories the irregularities of his Latin Quarter days.

Still, Lucienne had no intention of troubling her father. She was trained to believe that she had no legitimate, no righteous claim on him. Poor Loulou was true to the rule of the game that, for her, had had lifelong seriousness. Even on her death-bed she has kept faithfully to the terms of the unequal bargain. She had told Lucienne that her father had behaved "generously," that she has no further legitimate claim on him. But she remembers Chartier's kindness of heart and recommends her daughter to apply to him for advice and recommendations helpful in the way of finding her honest employment. So that this is the reason why Lucienne has sought out Monsieur Chartier. She is now alone in the world—poor "Loulou's" savings nearly exhausted. Can Monsieur Chartier, perhaps, amongst his friends,

find her a situation as secretary or companion, where she may earn an honest livelihood?

Touched to the heart by Loulou's good remembrance and confidence in him is Chartier, and at once interested in Lucienne's case.

Chartier. Yes, yes, certainly—you did well, mademoiselle, to come to me! I shall at once make inquiries amongst all my acquaintances. We shall find you a charming post; I give you my promise, to set about it at once.

Although the good Chartier is perfectly sincere in his desire and resolution to find Lucienne a "charming post," he does not feel that there is any need to distress and upset the nervous and despondent Lucien by telling him about the appearance upon the scene of Loulou's daughter (and his own) and of her need of assistance. But he has no secrets from Laure, and he at once consults his resourceful sister and confides to her his charming and discreet plan of finding Lucienne a pleasant situation as the companion of a lady who travels a great deal; thus Lucienne will see different countries, have a good salary and be as happy as the day is long—*also*, she will be kept out of the way of upsetting the nerves of the timorous Lucien.

Laure, however, the "good genius," takes another view of the case. It is *Lucienne's* homelessness, not Lucien's nerves, that appears to her the chief question. She remembers, too, the "grave" state of mind of Hélène Briant, the result of her ineffectual efforts to react against her depressing environment—most repugnant to

a charming woman still young but arrived at an age when she is forced to realise that one is not *always* going to be young and charming, and who has no children, and no congenial companionship, and who, nevertheless, is "honest"—so far, Laure then *forms her own plan.* And the first step is to make known the facts of Lucienne's identity, situation and presence at Trouville to Lucien, and to Hélène also. This is how she announces what, to him, at first appears a desperately indiscreet proceeding, to Chartier, who, ultimately, becomes a convert to her scheme.

Laure begins by assuring her brother that an excess of discretion condemns those who make it their rule to fail in friendly services.

Laure [*to Chartier*]. Let me tell you what you *should* have done, what you ought to have done. You should have taken Lucien on one side, and, without worrying about the consequences, have simply made him acquainted with the facts. He had to be confronted with his duty. And since at heart he is, in spite of everything, an honest man, and that the very worst actions of his sort—and of your sort—don't keep you from being thoroughly kind-hearted, he would certainly have found a happier and more consoling solution than to leave his daughter in distress. That is what you ought to have done. And as I saw you were not going to do it, that is what I have done.

Chartier. What do you say? Good God! You have seen Lucien?

Laure. Half an hour ago; after *déjeuner.*

Chartier. It is simply insane, what you have done! He must have been utterly prostrated by such a blow, poor devil?

Laure. Yes. He turned very pale. Then he rushed off to consult his father. Now what can happen to him, at the worst?

He will have to endure some hours of worry, of anxiety, perhaps of remorse. What then? He deserves it. Lucienne is seventeen—she has in front of her the promise of a long existence, an existence conferred upon her by a light-hearted gentleman in an hour of distraction. Well, it is *Lucienne* who interests me. You will tell me that it is not my concern—that I am interfering in a delicate matter which is no business of mine?

Chartier. Precisely. That was just what I was going to say.

Laure. And my answer is, that if one only occupied oneself with one's own concerns one would only accomplish selfish and mediocre things.

How does Lucien act after he has received the fateful news? All lamentations is he when he bursts into the room after his interview with his father. Chartier, Laure and Hélène wait to learn what, by the counsel, no doubt, of Briant *père*, Lucien proposes to do.

Lucien. Ah, mon ami [*addressing Chartier*], who would have believed it? What a fatality! What a drama for my conscience! Well, well—what one has to do is to occupy oneself with the present and possible. You will tell Lucienne from me that she has no longer any need to fear for the future: that shall be *my* charge.

Chartier. Well done. Well done.

Lucien. Yes; but upon one condition—oh, a condition of stringent importance. The condition is that she must return immediately to this village, near Limoges. She has lived there up to the present hour—she can quite easily go on living there. I will send her every month, and I will guarantee to her in the event of my death, a yearly pension, that will be sufficient for her support. There. Do you find that I am acting very badly? And you, madame [*to Laure*], do *you* think I am behaving badly?

Laure. Well, not exactly bad.

Lucien. Well, that comforts me a little. But what a catastrophe! Ah, if ever I have a son of my own, I shall try that he may profit by my example.

But Lucien has not a son of his own. The only child he has is the daughter he is going to bury alive in the village near Limoges, without even seeing her—this, of course, by the counsel of *l'homme correct*, Briant *père*.

But here Hélène intervenes. She has walked innocently into the trap prepared for her by Laure. In other words, she has seen Lucienne, and her heart has gone out to the motherless girl. Thus she has come by her own path into Laure's plot and plan ; she is resolved to adopt Lucienne. She urges her case, which has the independent advantage of upsetting the counsels of Briant *père*, with warm generosity, but, at the same time, with her usual vivacity.

Hélène. Lucien, you are my closest friend ; and the object of my dutiful affection, of course—but you can't be my constant companion and the confidante, whom I want, in sometimes empty and tiresome hours. Understand that ; and consent to what I beg of you. Well, the companion I want *is here* ; she is your daughter. You have not given me a child ; make me the present of Lucienne. I am not a mother ; but let me have the illusion of maternity.

Firm in the belief that happiness lies before her and her husband in the adoption of Lucienne, Hélène will hear of no other solution to the situation. And in this she has the good genius, Laure, with her ; and next the *bonhomme philosophe*, Chartier ; and finally the timid, despondent Lucien himself, who, in the last scene, comes face to face with his daughter.

All emotion is Lucien. And he breaks down completely when Lucienne shows him a photo-

graph taken of him in the Latin Quarter, when he was the lover of Loulou, a wild figure in corduroy clothes, a long, flowing cape and an amazing hat.

Lucienne, who imagines she is going to be sent back to the village near Limoges, and may never possibly see her father again, does not wish to be separated from the souvenir that stood for the image of him, in his young days. She stretches out her hand, asking for the return of the photograph :

Lucienne. You will not take it away? You will leave it with me?

Lucien. No. I shall keep it. And that is not all, I shall keep—I should be mad to fight any longer against my own heart; against your youth and my own—I shall keep the picture, and *you* as well!

Chartier, Hélène and Laure enter and behold, with joy, Lucienne in her father's embrace. But now arrives the apostle of correctness, Briant *père*. He is not so much astonished, not so much shocked as filled with contempt, and lifted above all contact with the irregular sentiments and ill-directed sympathies of this emotional group of people, whom he attempts to freeze, with his superior disdain. And it is at this moment that he utters the unforgettable sentence which is one of the master-strokes in the play :

Briant père. It is quite sufficient to-day—and believe me, when simply stating the fact, I do not allow myself to be the least bit in the world disturbed by it—it suffices that a child should be illegitimate in order to find itself the object of universal sympathy; in the same way, it suffices that a woman is not a lawful wife to render her immediately the object of universal respect. Let married women, and children born in

wedlock, make no mistake about it: they are going to have a bad time.[1]

Lucien attempts to mollify his high displeasure. But Briant *père* (happily for his family's welfare, perhaps) insists that he must separate himself henceforth from these offenders. He shakes hands with his son and with Hélène—salutes, stiffly, Laure and Chartier. Then, with a curt bow to Lucienne and the one word, "*Mademoiselle*," he takes his departure.

Lucienne [*to Hélène*]. Qui est ce monsieur?
Hélène. C'est ton grand-père.

3. M. Brieux, "La Déserteuse," at the Odéon

"Brieux at the Odéon? Brieux passing from the grim playhouse of M. Antoine, to the calm, placid, highly respectable Odéon?" Such must have been the startled exclamations of hundreds of playgoers when it was announced that the "Second Theatre of France" had "received," and was actually rehearsing, a new drama by the author of *Les Avariés* and *Maternité*.

Amazing tidings, certainly. And especially amazing, even alarming, to the regular mature patrons of the Odéon, whose peaceful way of life, whose tranquil train of thought, could not but be

[1] *Briant* père. Il suffit aujourd'hui—et je le constate sans en être le moins du monde troublé, croyez-le bien—il suffit qu'un enfant soit naturel pour se voir l'objet de la sympathie générale, comme il suffit qu'une femme ne soit pas légitime pour être immédiatement entourée du respect universel. Que les femmes et les enfants ne se le dissimulent pas, ils sont en train de passer un mauvais quart d'heure.

upset by the ardent, revolutionary M. Brieux. They desire no disagreeable awakenings, and, above all, no " social problems."

I fancy the neighbourhood has affected our mature ones! They live round about the Senate, whose members, we know, are renowned for a constant drowsiness. Is not the Upper Chamber popularly described as the " Palace of Sleep " ? The alert, frisky Parisian cannot endure the *Palais du Sommeil.* He wants emotions, excitement—and he finds them in the Chamber of Deputies, which never sleeps.

" A restful sanctuary " is Mr Bodley's idea of the Senate. " It does very little ; it is not highly considered. The idea sometimes suggested is that of a retreat for elderly gentlemen."

Well, the regular mature patron of the Odéon may be likened to the Senator: his intellect is impaired by the same constant drowsiness. And the " Second Theatre of France "—most Parisians dispute its right to that distinguished title—may be likened to the Senate. It is not highly considered; it renders but small services to the dramatic art; and, at times, it presents the appearance of a restful sanctuary.

But—arrives M. Brieux. Arrives, actually, upon this tranquil, drowsy scene, the ardent, revolutionary author of *Maternité* and *Les Avariés.* What—oh, what—is in store for the regular mature patrons? No doubt they were all anxiety, all indignation, until it was understood that M. Brieux had not arrived in their demure domain

alone. With him, M. Jean Sigaux. With him, a collaborator who might be expected to exercise restraint. Has M. Sigaux fulfilled those expectations? Is M. Brieux of the Odéon the M. Brieux of the Théâtre Antoine? Or, has M. Brieux been intimidated by Odéon traditions?

Not unanimous on this point are the leading French dramatic critics. Three or four of them profess themselves disappointed with *La Déserteuse*, because unable to recognise M. Brieux's change of attitude. They are still under the spell of *Maternité*, where the author so vigorously and so ruthlessly attacked the "established morality" and "dominant passions." The change of attitude is undeniable. But *La Déserteuse* is a strong, generous, human play; and all the more interesting from our own special point of view, as students of the French stage in its relation to French life, because it does not represent a dramatic exposure of injustices and impostures, prevalent (if we believe the reformer) in all European societies, but a dramatic illustration of universal passions and emotions, as these manifest themselves under the influence of traditional sentiments and habits of thought and feeling that belong essentially to France.

The French bourgeois: wherein he differs from, and as a type of humanity is superior to, the English shopkeeper; the French *jeune fille*—and the French sentiment about her—and wherein this sentiment explains her jealously and tenderly guarded inferiority in attractiveness, intelligence and independence to her English prototype—

here are the secrets which *La Déserteuse* may assist a foreign spectator to penetrate. . . .

We are in the town of Nantes, in the home of Forjot, music publisher, husband, father and confirmed bourgeois. Forjot also gives concerts, but he himself is nothing of a musician and would regard music with contempt, were it not a means of making money. Not so his wife, Gabrielle, young, beautiful and vivacious, who has been assured by the director of the local theatre that she is possessed of a rare voice. Gabrielle sings at little Nantais concerts and is admired and applauded. Gabrielle is told that she would triumph on the operatic stage—and sighs. She loves excitement, she longs for fame, she is full of dreams and ambitions and fancies—but she finds no sympathiser in the music publisher, her husband, who, looking up impatiently from his ledgers, bids her pay more attention to her house, her child and " the rest."

Gabrielle. What do you mean by "the rest"? Do you want me to write out the bills, for instance?

Forjot. Never mind the bills: my shopman does that. But I see no reason why you should not stay in the shop and receive clients, and, when there is a press of work, lend me a helping hand with the correspondence.

Gabrielle. Don't expect me to do anything of the sort.

It is the old story: the bourgeois husband and the beautiful, dissatisfied, ambitious wife, who rebels at her dull surroundings, who believes herself " wasted," who is tempted by a sympathetic admirer; and who falls. Rametty, director of

the Nantes Theatre, is Gabrielle's lover. His ardent prayer that she should accompany him on one of his tours and win the fame that inevitably awaits her, rings constantly in her ears. She resists, chiefly for the sake of her daughter, Pascaline. But the temptation to fly becomes irresistible when, on the night of one of Forjot's concerts, audience, friends, her lover, and even a popular composer from Paris, delight, intoxicate her with their praise. Forjot, however, stands aloof; the eulogies of the popular composer—respectfully known as *Le Maître*—exasperate him.

Le Maître. Madame Forjot has sung admirably. Let me give my testimony. I do not know anyone, you mark me, I say *anyone,* and I am not excepting the most celebrated vocalists—I do not know *anyone* capable of singing this air with such mastery.

Forjot. Oh, you exaggerate, surely, her talent, Master. You are too indulgent.

Le Maître. I am not indulgent. Madame is an incomparable lyrical tragedian. But, madame, you must not remain *en province*—it would be a crime.

In ecstasies is Gabrielle. In the heavens is Gabrielle. But she soon comes to earth again, when at last she and her husband find themselves alone. Forjot has returned to his ledgers—is making up his accounts. He has not a word to say of his wife's success. He is entirely absorbed in the night's receipts. He counts under his breath; he rustles the pages of his ledgers; he is—to Gabrielle—exasperating, maddening, intolerable.

And the storm bursts when Gabrielle, beside herself with rage, dashes one of the ledgers to the ground.

Now furious, now broken, now contemptuous, now with hoarse, poignant emotion, Forjot addresses his wife.

He knows her to be the mistress of Rametty. His illness of three years ago was due to that humiliating and horrible discovery, but he had thought that she had sinned in a moment of madness and was repentant; and so he resolved to pardon her, generously, without even charging her with her crime:

Forjot. After I had discovered your treachery, I had that attack of brain fever, which nearly left you free. As a result of being brought so near to death, thoughts came to me that I might not have had otherwise, and they ripened in the long hours of my convalescence. When I recovered, as I was touched by the care you had taken in nursing me, and by your grief (which I still believe was sincere), I thought you had only given way to a mad impulse; and I forgave you in the silence of my heart. Yes; I know well I am not like the husbands in the novels you are constantly reading. Those husbands are idle men of fortune; their child's future causes them no tormenting anxiety; they have not the incessant preoccupations of carrying on a large business concern, where many interests of others, as well as one's own are involved. With men in *my* class, a false wife does not mean killing someone; it means asking for a divorce. Well, I did not want to make Pascaline the daughter of a divorced woman; nor did I want to expose her to the sense of disgrace of finding out her mother's degradation. And it is on Pascaline's account that I am putting you to-day in a position when you can make your choice—either become again the wife and mother you ought to be; or else I *shall* ask for a divorce. I don't want to see again what I saw to-day, Rametty embracing *my* child! Nor do I want that one of these days, Pascaline may be told by some little playmate that her mother is a wanton [which is true], and her father a man who consents to his own dishonour—which is *not* true.

Gabrielle. Well, then, ask for a divorce. Adieu.

Forjot. What is your decision?

Gabrielle. To leave you.

Forjot. Think well of what it means. It means throwing over, once and for ever, a regular life.

Gabrielle. It bores me to death this "regular" life. And then, do you imagine I could endure to go on living near you when I knew that you despised me enough to hold your tongue about what you had discovered?

Forjot. If you stay, I promise that, by my attitude towards you, you may be able to suppose that everything is forgotten.

Gabrielle. No! I refuse to lead here the life of eternal humiliation you offer me. Good-night.

Forjot. Good-night. You have given me all the pain it was in your power to give.

But even now the music publisher does not believe that Gabrielle will desert him. Shortly after she has left the room his little daughter enters and asks for her mother. The servant is sent in quest of Gabrielle, but returns to announce that she is nowhere to be found. When Forjot realises that his wife has left him he covers his face with his handkerchief and trembles all over and sobs.

Pascaline [*running up to him*]. Father! Father! What *is* the matter?

Forjot. Nothing, nothing. [*He uncovers his face, which is tragic with sorrow and stained with tears.*] My child, your mother has gone away from us on a long journey.

In a former paper[1] I spoke of the prodigious importance of the child in France; the Child, the great indestructible bond between the parents.

[1] In a criticism of M. Paul Hervieu's *La Dédale* given in *The Fortnightly Review* series of articles upon "French Life and the French and the French Stage," by John F. Macdonald. By the kind permission of the Editor of *The Fortnightly Review* these articles are reprinted here.—F. M.

Of course, exceptions—as in Gabrielle Forjot's case. But, as we shall see, Gabrielle seeks to recover Pascaline; and it is around this struggle that the vital interest of the play centres. It is also around this struggle, and in the feelings, language and conduct of those engaged in it that we realise the different conditions of sentiment, morals and manners that characterise respectively the French bourgeoisie and the lower English middle class.

Pascaline is the typical *jeune fille*. In the First Act she is a child of thirteen; thirteen, *l'âge ingrate*, for at that period the French *jeune fille* is plain. It is considered right—imperative—that she should be plain. If she be not so by nature she is made so. See her in her convent dress, her " Sunday best "—the one that most successfully conceals her natural grace—when Mademoiselle is most nearly a fright. Pascaline, for instance, first appears before us shy, awkward, with her hair dragged back from her forehead and falling down her shoulders in depressing little plaits, and arrayed in a dreadful white dress which no English girl of her age would don without a struggle and a tearful outburst. Nevertheless, the *jeune fille* is adored, and she knows it. She is strictly, terribly *surveillée*—but that, after all, is a proof of her importance. She must be protected from dangers, so precious is she. Has she, at the age of fifteen, only to cross the street the servant (I can see the indignant glances and hear the expressions of pity of her English sisters) must be close at her elbow. Plenty and plenty of

time to wear fine dresses and make the first exciting bow to the world, and to be surprised, and to wonder. Says the French mother, speaking from experience: "It is delicious to be a *jeune fille*. And I tell my Yvonne so, when she grumbles." But Yvonne's grumblings do not betray a tragic, desperate state of mind. As a matter of fact, Yvonne, in spite of those dresses and that constant strict, terrible surveillance, is delightfully happy. And I expect her first bow to the world will be made all the more exciting by that long, rigid training, and that she will don her elegant dresses with all the more rapture, and that she will find life the more brilliant, exhilarating and extraordinary. The parents preserve those old, ugly dresses. When Cosette left her convent, and discarded her depressing dress for tasteful finery, and did what she pleased with her hair, and became all of a sudden beautiful—Jean Valjean kept the dress, and often brought it forth in secret, and looked upon it with infinite tenderness and emotion. . . .

But to return to our particular *jeune fille*, Pascaline. In the Second Act, she is seventeen and charming. Nevertheless, it is still necessary to hide from her all dangerous knowledge, all doubts or suspicions, even of the existence of evil outside her own experience. Father, governess, nurse, family friends and all who approach her are in league to keep from her the true history of her mother's desertion. The legend, as she hears it, is that the brilliant, captivating mother she

recollects abandoned her home in order to follow her vocation—to become a great and famous singer. And this passionately interests Pascaline; consequently, she is wild with excitement when, after a four years' absence, her mother claims the right to see her daughter, and obtains legal authorisation to do so. Then, trouble. For, in the meanwhile, Forjot has married the excellent, trustworthy governess, Hélène, chiefly because she was so devoted to the little Pascaline and would make her a second mother. Pascaline at thirteen—dazzled and overawed by the brilliant Gabrielle—had treated the kind and homely governess as a confidante; but at seventeen—flattered, fascinated and caressed by Gabrielle—she sees in Hélène only the "Stranger," who has usurped her mother's place.

Then begins the second struggle; that is once again to make havoc of poor Forjot's domestic peace! The struggle of Hélène, on the one side, to reconquer by patience and kindness, and sometimes by affectionate reproaches, the confidence of the child she loves, and has cared for as her own; and of Pascaline, on the other side, to resist these attentions and appeals to her feelings and to remain true to her more brilliant mother, who, she is convinced, has been harshly turned out of her home, simply because she was too artistic to make a good bourgeoise housekeeper of the usual type.

The knot in the entangled situation is that Pascaline must not be told the truth. So that

misunderstanding the position, she cannot, from her own point of view, without disloyalty to her admired and adored mother, recognise the interloper, Hélène, as the rightful mistress of her father's home, and with claims upon herself, Pascaline, for respect and gratitude, on account of the care and affection she has shown one whom she has robbed of her natural guardian.

Pascaline comes back from her first interview with Gabrielle fascinated and enthusiastic, and full of anger and disdain for the homelier, much less outwardly demonstrative Hélène. This condition of mind becomes aggravated later on, when Gabrielle is in misfortune. Alas! her voice has failed her. She is no longer able to follow her artistic vocation, for the sake of which she sacrificed her home. She now is directress of a theatrical agency, and she is no longer so gay, although still full of noble courage. All this Pascaline confides to her old nurse, Marion, with whom she is still able to talk about her mother.

Pascaline. Oh, Marion dear! When one thinks of mama coming back; and of her having no right to enter this house, and of someone else installed in her place! If you only could have seen how sad she was when she left me, my poor mama, who is generally so gay! And no wonder she is sad. All alone there at Auteuil in a little pavilion, Rue des Martyrs, at her office, a stuffy little place without sunshine, without air.

The Nurse. At her "office"?

Pascaline. Yes. You must know that, for some time, mama has not been able to sing. It is all the trouble she has gone through. You see to be constantly crying is not good for the voice, so that now she is the directress of an agency for theatrical tours. You can understand that, as I am no longer

a child, I have a right to know things. I *do* know *now* why papa sent mama away.

Marion. Did your mother tell you?

Pascaline. Yes. Papa would not allow her to sing anywhere! So then mama, who had an admirable voice, felt obliged to follow an irresistible vocation.

This is the legend as Pascaline has received it from her mother. Marion does not contradict it. Nor yet do Forjot and Hélène ever hint at the true facts of Gabrielle's desertion. Hélène's reticence is heroic, for Pascaline becomes more and more bitter against the good Hélène and defies her to justify herself by some real fault discovered in Gabrielle, worse than the noble ambition of a gifted artist.

Pascaline [*to Hélène*]. Of course, you are burning to tell me all about poor mama's divorce. Well: let me show you I know all about it already. I know that, in spite of my father's orders, mama would go on singing, and then she was rather extravagant, and, well, she was not domesticated, and chose to follow her artistic vocation. There you have the whole story of her sins. Oh, *if* there *is* anything else, I invite you, or rather, I require you to tell me. *Was* there anything else?

Hélène [*avoiding Pascaline's eyes*]. There was nothing else.

Pascaline [*triumphantly*]. There, you are forced to admit it! Mama's *only* fault was that she had an artistic vocation! Again I beg you to contradict me, if you can. *Was* there anything else against her?

Hélène. No; only that—nothing else.

However, one little awakening, one little shock. In the Third Act Pascaline visits the theatrical agency, sees the tawdriness of the place, hears noisy laughter and is even addressed at length by a shabby old comedian—a veritable *cabotin*—who

mistakes her for an *ingénue,* in quest of an engagement. The comedian is delightful. He might have stepped straight on to the Odéon stage from one of those dim little cafés haunted by broken-down actors in the neighbourhood of the Porte St-Martin. He appals Pascaline with his grins, grimaces and familiarity. Pascaline's silence he attributes to worry. And he seeks to console her by declaring that one must always be gay, always be smiling, even if one has eaten nothing all day and the landlord has threatened to turn one out into the street. He calls her *mon petit enfant,* and *mon petit chat,* and he *tutoies* her. Pure, irresistible comedy! The scene deserves to be quoted in full, but we must hasten on to the *dénouement.*

It is close. Life at the Nantais publisher's has become intolerable. Constant strife; day after day, scenes between Pascaline and her step-mother. And, at last, Hélène decides on a daring step: to visit Gabrielle, tell her of Forjot's unhappiness, implore her to interfere no longer between father and daughter. But she fails to move Gabrielle, who is cold and impertinent. And then, believing that if she herself disappeared, Pascaline would be entirely restored to Forjot, Hélène determines to leave Nantes and resume her dull career of governess. And this determination becomes all the stronger when she learns that Pascaline has fled Nantes and taken refuge with her mother. Poor Forjot has aged and withered when next we see him. Pascaline's

flight has been a bitter blow. But the music publisher will not hear of Hélène's sacrifice, and is passionately bidding her remain, when Gabrielle is announced. Hélène leaves the room. And Gabrielle and Forjot find themselves face to face again.

In the great scene that follows, Gabrielle begins by saying that, as Hélène has determined to leave Nantes, she, Gabrielle, no longer wishes to keep Pascaline away from her father, and has brought her home.

Forjot declares that Hélène shall not be sacrificed; and upon this, Gabrielle proclaims her intention of keeping Pascaline.

Now again we have the Bourgeois Forjot displaying qualities of temper, character and moral sense, of the very highest order: qualities of the chivalrous sort. He does not fly into a passion. He does not taunt this offender against maternal and conjugal obligations. But earnestly and simply he addresses the author of all this trouble; and with a self-restraint that would certainly not have been found in his English prototype, he invites her to examine her own conduct; and to ask herself whether it is Hélène and himself, or whether it is Gabrielle herself, and Gabrielle only, who has behaved cruelly and selfishly to Pascaline, as well as to the husband she betrayed and the good woman who has taken care of the child she abandoned.

Forjot. Gabrielle, just remember. *You* are the cause of all this trouble. It only depended upon you to stay on here, and never to be separated from your child. I never made your-

life unhappy! I loved you; and you know very well I should have forgiven you. I begged you to stay and you would not. What harm you have done by obeying your caprice! Just now I saw very well you hardly recognised me—so aged am I by all this. For my part, I have never harmed you. Hélène has never harmed you—what do you say? No, no; she has never harmed you! And yet it is we who are punished. It is because *you* behaved badly in the past that *we* are threatened to-day with distress and loneliness. After having poisoned my life, you wish then to hasten my death?

Gabrielle. You know very well that I regret having made you suffer.

Forjot. Let me tell you this: a great many people would not have acted as we have done. They might not have told our child the real story of your desertion; but they would not have invented excuses for you.

Gabrielle. Yes; I know you have been very kind, and I thank you for it.

Forjot. I am not the only one you ought to thank. Hélène has always respected you: she has taught Pascaline to love you! It seems to me that should touch you. Give our child back to us. Now, admit it, you have launched yourself upon a new life. You have made yourself different from us. I can't well explain myself; and it is difficult to make you understand my feelings because I don't want to use words that might hurt or irritate you; but I must put the facts before you plainly.

Always generous is Forjot. Not one brutal, not one harsh word does he throw at his wife! He promises that Pascaline shall continue to visit her as often as she pleases, if Gabrielle, on the other side, will promise not to poison Pascaline's mind against him and Hélène. Gabrielle is touched. Rising, she opens the door, and brings in Pascaline. And Pascaline, seeing her poor father's anxious, care-worn face, runs up to him.

Pascaline. Oh, father! father! advise me. I am puzzled, bewildered. Something tells me I am acting badly; but I

don't know what I ought to do. Oh, dear, I don't know what I ought to do!

Forjot. My little Girl, it all depends upon you whether I am to finish my life in misery, or in peace. You can give me happiness in the days I have still to live. But to do that, you must come back to us; and you must try to treat Hélène with the respect and gratitude you owe her. In her despair at not being able to win back your affection, she wants to leave us. She wishes to return once more to the lonely, uncertain life of a governess. She wants to plunge herself into this unknown, uncertain destiny. It is I who appeal to you to have mercy upon her, and upon me.

Pascaline. Ah, if only I might love you without being false to Mama!

Gabrielle [*emotionally*]. You can, you can, Pascaline! Yes, my daughter, I am not the mother that you believe in! Since I left you I have created for myself a new life, new habits, new affections; and then, Pascaline, I am going to marry again!

Always, emotionally, Gabrielle tells how she once had two paths to choose, and that she chose the wrong one.

But Pascaline interrupts her with a cry of: "What a calumny!" and vows that her mother has never done wrong. And that she knows for certain, *as Hélène herself has often told her so.*

Gabrielle. Eh bien, va embrasser Hélène pour celà. Je te le demande. Je vous la confie, Hélène.

And so, the end. Not heroic, in accordance with the English poetic sentiment, demanding that Gabrielle should pass out sorrowing and penitent; convicted in her child's eyes, who flies for safety to the virtuous bosom of Hélène, but *à l'aimable,* in accordance with the French sentiment expressed by Forjot: "Mon enfant, si l'on

n'avait pas d'indulgence les uns pour les autres, la vie des plus braves gens ne serait pas possible."

But what comes of it all? No argument for or against divorce; no attack upon, no justification of the French method of educating the *jeune fille*. But a picture of the feelings and emotions bound up with that method; and a picture also of the generous reasonableness, sense of justice, and human kindness that lie at the root of French character—and that may to some extent compensate for a lack of the absolutely sincere and unadulterated love of decency and respectability for their own sakes that are our own distinguishing characteristics.

4. Paris, M. Edmond Rostand, and "Chantecler"

Six years have elapsed since a Paris newspaper announced that M. Constant Coquelin—dear, wonderful Coquelin *aîné*—had suddenly taken train to the south-west of France in the following circumstances:—

"Yesterday morning the greatest of our comedians received a telegram urging him to proceed without delay to Cambo, the tranquil, beautiful country seat, in the Pyrenees, of M. Edmond Rostand. No sooner had he read the message than M. Coquelin bade Gillett, his devoted valet, pack a valise, hail a *fiacre*, and accompany him to the Gare d'Orléans. Excitement and delight were depicted on the face of the distinguished traveller, whom we found smoking a

cigarette in front of a first-class compartment. 'Yes,' he joyously admitted. 'Yes, I am off to the Pyrenees—but that is all I shall tell you.' Never, indeed, such indomitable discretion! In reply to our adroit, persuasive questions regarding the object of his journey, M. Coquelin made such irrelevant observations as these: 'The weather looks threatening,' and 'Gillett is the most admirable of valets,' and 'Ah, my friends, has it ever occurred to you what an extraordinary thing is a railway station?' And then, as the train steamed slowly away: 'You may state in your article that the cushions of this carriage are exceedingly restful and sympathetic.' Still, in spite of M. Coquelin's reticence, we are in a position to acquaint our readers with the reason of this sudden, this sensational visit to Cambo. *M. Edmond Rostand is engaged upon a new play, and the leading part in it will be sustained by M. Coquelin.* Down there in the golden calm of the Pyrenees—yes, even as we pen these words—the most exquisite of poets is reading to the most brilliant of actors . . . another *chef-d'œuvre.* It will surpass the triumphant, the glorious *Cyrano de Bergerac*! Parisians will certainly rejoice, Parisians will assuredly be thrilled to hear of the superb, artistic festival in store for them."

Such, six years ago, was the very first—and very florid—*potin* to be published on *Chantecler*; and no sooner had it appeared than Paris, truly enough, "rejoiced" and was "thrilled"—but complained that it was maddening and heart-

breaking to know so little about the new masterpiece. What was its theme? What, too, was the title? And when—oh, when—would the first performance take place? In order to satisfy the Parisian's curiosity, newspaper editors despatched their Yellowest Reporters to Cambo with instructions to force a statement out of the comedian and the poet. With the Yellow Ones went alert, sharp photographers. And then, what strange, indelicate scenes in that once-tranquil and refined spot in the Pyrenees! Since M. Rostand and his guest refused to receive the invaders, the latter set about performing their vulgar mission from a distance. Outside the poet's picturesque Basque villa, cameras and cameras; and again and again was the "golden calm" of Cambo disturbed by shouts of "There's Madame Rostand at that window," and "There's her son, Maurice, picking a flower," and "There's Rostand talking hard to Coquelin on a bench." Nobody, nothing in the far-spreading grounds, escaped the photographers. The gardener was "taken"; so were a housemaid, a peacock, a mowing-machine, a dog and a hammock. As for the reporters, they followed MM. Rostand and Coquelin when the latter took their afternoon walks, even hid themselves behind bushes and hedges in the hopes of overhearing a fragment of their conversation; and minutely they described in their newspapers the gait and the gestures of the comedian, and the smile, the eyeglass and the extreme elegance of the poet; and wildly they declared that insomuch as

MM. Rostand and Coquelin discussed naught but the new masterpiece during those afternoon walks, every step they took left a glorious, an historic imprint in the dusty white lane. But the subject of the play, the date of its production ?—“ mystery, mystery ! ” admitted the reporters. Nor was it until many months later, and until after M. Coquelin had paid half-a-dozen visits to Cambo, that Paris heard with amazement that M. Rostand's hero was a cock, his heroine a hen pheasant, his chief scene a farm-yard, in which all kinds of feathered creatures were to fly, strut and waddle about. As Paris was marvelling at the novelty and audacity of the idea, the poet fell ill. A severe operation kept him an invalid a whole year. The successive deaths of a relative and of three close friends so shocked him that he had not the heart to return to his work. But when in the autumn of 1908 M. Coquelin made yet another expedition to Cambo, the “ glorious,” “ historic ” walks were resumed. In M. Rostand's study, animated, all-night sittings. In the drawing-room, extraordinary rehearsals—M. Coquelin the cock, Madame Rostand the pheasant, M. Rostand a dog, young Maurice Rostand a blackbird. Then visits from wig-makers, costumiers, scene-painters, electricians. And at last the official, stirring announcement that M. Rostand and the play were leaving for Paris, that the name of the play was *Chantecler*, and that the first performance would be given at the Porte St-Martin Theatre in the spring of 1909.

It was in January of that year that M. Rostand took up his abode in an hotel facing the Tuileries Gardens. The corridor outside the poet's suite of apartments was guarded by footmen—so many sentinels with instructions to let nobody pass; and thus M. Rostand was secure from cameras and Yellow scribbling pencils except when he left the hotel, entered a motor car and sped off to the pleasant little country town of Pont-aux-Dames, where Constant Coquelin had founded a home for aged and infirm actors. Of this establishment Coquelin *aîné* himself was then an inmate. Not that he was feeling old or infirm—"only a little fatigued and in need of calm and repose ere disguising myself as a proud, majestic cock." Kindly Coquelin was never so happy as when playing the host to his score of superannuated actors and actresses. He called them his "guests," and had provided them with easy-chairs, a library, a billiard-table, playing cards, backgammon boards and gramophones; and with summer-houses in the garden where the old ladies might gossip and gossip out of the glare of the sun, and with a lake, too, in which the old fellows might fish. Also, he invited them to relate their theatrical experiences—the rôles they had played, the successes they had achieved, the costumes they had worn long, long ago; and, oh, dear me, how the "guests" took their host at his word—yes, heavens, how garrulously and lavishly they responded! Withered old Joyeux (late—very late—of the Palais Royal) described how emperors

and kings had been convulsed by his grins, winks and tricks; swollen, red-faced Hector Duchatel (slim, elegant, irresistible at the Vaudeville in the seventies) declared that beautiful *mondaines* had sighed, almost swooned, when he passionately made love on the stage; wrinkled, haggard Mademoiselle Giselle de Perle (once such a radiant *blonde* at the Bouffes) narrated how she could scarcely turn round in her dressing-room for the *corbeilles* of flowers, in which jewels and *billets-doux* from illustrious personages lay concealed. Then, after all these reminiscences, the "guests" produced faded, tattered newspaper cuttings, that proclaimed Joyeux "extraordinaire de fantaisie et de verve," and Hector Duchatel "le roi de la mode," and Mademoiselle de Perle "the most exquisite, the most incomparable of blondes"—"Cabotinville," if you like; the tawdry, flashy talk of M. le Cabot and Madame la Cabotine. But I like, nevertheless, to call up the vision of Coquelin *aîné*, wrapped in a dressing-gown, a skull-cap pulled down over his ears, listening patiently and sympathetically to these confidences of the past, and reading through the faded newspaper cuttings, and saying to haggard Mademoiselle de Perle: "I myself, like everybody else, was once madly in love with you," and to withered old Joyeux: "Those winks and grins of yours were excruciating," and—— But an end to this digression. The scene between Coquelin *aîné* and his superannuated "guests" is cut short by the arrival, from the hotel in the rue de Rivoli, of the author of *Chantecler*.

Well, Constant Coquelin was wearing a dressing-gown and a skull-cap, because he felt a little "fatigued." But the visits of M. Rostand, and of the wigmakers, scene-painters and costumiers, as well as the impatience of the Parisians to behold the new "masterpiece," restored to the comedian all his former energy, enthusiasm. Final resolutions were made. The first rehearsal at the Porte St-Martin Theatre was fixed for the following week; the first performance would be given, irrevocably, in the middle of May. "What a triumph we shall have!" said Coquelin *aîné* to the few friends he received in the Home. "Ah, my admirable Gillett, what a work of genius is *Chantecler*!" he exclaimed, when the devoted valet lighted him to his bedroom. "Listen, I will recite to you Rostand's *Hymn to the Sun*. And after that, my good Gillett, you shall hear me crow." Replied faithful Gillett: "To-morrow—not to-night. It is wiser to go to sleep." But Constant Coquelin refused to sleep until he had recited and crowed. Up and down the room, in the dressing-gown and skull-cap, he strutted. The superannuated actors and actresses were awakened by his cry: "Je t'adore, Soleil!" Five minutes later there resounded throughout the Home a clarion, peremptory—"Cocorico." Said the old players: "The master is rehearsing." Said Gillett: "Your old servant insists upon your going to bed." Said Coquelin *aîné*: "When I have played Chantecler I shall retire from the stage, and you and I, my faithful Gillett, will pass

the rest of our lives down here, tranquilly, happily, amidst our twenty old guests." But next morning, after Gillett had helped his master into the dressing-gown, Constant Coquelin fell heavily to the floor. Cry after cry from admirable Gillett, cries from the superannuated players—then profound silence and gloom. Gloom, too, in Paris. The blinds darkly drawn in the windows of the first floor of the rue de Rivoli hotel. The Porte St-Martin—other theatres—closed. All kinds of *soirées*, banquets and fêtes postponed. "What a disaster, what a tragedy, *mon ami* ; what a blow, what a calamity, *ma chère*." Gloom — dear, wonderful Coquelin *aîné* was dead. . . .

In the summer of 1909 M. Edmond Rostand, after spending four months in seclusion at Cambo, returned to Paris ; a few days later the rehearsals of *Chantecler* at the Porte St-Martin Theatre began. "Should anything happen to me, you must ask Guitry to play my part," had said Coquelin, to the poet. M. Guitry, therefore, was appointed "Chantecler," Madame Simone, ex-Le Bargy, was made the Hen Pheasant. Gay, frisky M. Galipaux was created Blackbird, M. Jean Coquelin, the great comedian's son, chose the rôle of the Dog. "Irrevocably in November," stated the newspapers, "we shall hear 'Chantecler' sound his first cocorico." And Paris rejoiced once again and was "thrilled."

But, ah me, how that positive word, "irrevocable," was misused ! No *Chantecler* in November, no "Cocorico" in December—only multitudinous

newspaper *potins* that constantly announced the postponement of the event, and described "life" at the Porte St-Martin and in M. Rostand's hotel on the Champs Elysées. It was repeatedly stated that the poet, after hot words with M. Guitry, had taken "the 9.39 train back to Cambo." It was asserted that Madame Simone had thrown her type-written rôle on to the stage, stamped hysterically on the rôle, and left the theatre in tears. It was furthermore reported that M. Guitry was about to undergo an operation for cancer; that lively Galipaux was suffering from acute melancholia; that M. Jean Coquelin, distracted, prematurely ancient and infirm, had taken refuge in the Home at Pont-aux-Dames. Then, the insinuation that Chantecler would never, never "cocorico." . . . Nor, according to the same newspaper *potins*, was "life" in M. Rostand's hotel more serene. He was as closely guarded as the Tsar of All the Russias. Nevertheless, a waiter who served him was, in reality, a Yellow Italian journalist; threatening letters and telegrams from lunatics arrived by the score; and wizened old cranks sent the poet baskets of feathers, with the solemn warning that unless these, and only these feathers, were worn by the Cock and the Hen Pheasant, well, M. Guitry and Madame Simone, and M. Rostand and *Chantecler* would be ridiculed, ruined, and done for. . . . In fine, what a November, what a December—and what a January of the present year! And when MM. Hertz and Jean Coquelin,

the proprietors of the Porte St-Martin Theatre, themselves announced that the first performance of *Chantecler* would be given on 28th January "*most irrevocably,*" how delirious became the *potins*, and how agitated the Parisians! The great question was: Would *Chantecler* be a triumphant success, or only a moderate success, or a catastrophe? To determine this problem, clairvoyantes—positively—were consulted. And Madame Olga de Sonski, at present of the rue des Martyrs, and late—so her card asserted—of Persia, Budapest, Cairo and Bond Street—Madame de Sonski declared she already felt the Porte St-Martin, massive theatre that it was, trembling, almost tottering, from applause. But not so Madame Juliette de Magenta, of the rue des Ténèbres, from Morocco, St Petersburg, Constantinople and Broadway: "I hear [*sic*] the silence, the coldness, the gloom of disappointment and disapproval," funereally she said. However, in spite of Madame de Magenta's lugubrious prognostications, the news came that M. Rostand had disposed of the publishing rights of *Chantecler* for one million francs; that stalls and dress-circle seats (for the box-office was now open) for the first three performances were selling like wildfire at six pounds apiece; that critics and millionaires from America, and French Ambassadors and Ministers from divers parts of Europe, and even dark-skinned, dyspeptic merchants from Buenos Ayres, were all hastening to Paris to hear the "cocorico" of Chantecler. What excitement, what a whirl!

For the twentieth time it was rumoured that M. Rostand had taken "the 9.39 train back to Cambo." Now M. Guitry had appendicitis; and Madame Simone had injured herself by falling through a trap-door. Nevertheless, the first performance remained fixed "most irrevocably" for 28th January—on which day many a quarter of Paris and most of the *banlieue* were flooded.

So, another postponement. Successively, and always "positively irrevocably," it was announced that the great event would take place on 31st January, 2nd February, 5th February and 6th February. And thus the critics and millionaires from America, the French Ambassadors and Ministers from divers European capitals, the merchants from Buenos Ayres (looking sallow and bloodshot from the voyage) were detained in Paris at much personal inconvenience and loss to themselves. Nothing would move them until they had heard the clarion cry of—"Cocorico." And M. Pichon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, became uneasy at the prolonged sojourn of the Ministers and Ambassadors. "Diplomatic relations between France and many a foreign Power are interrupted," he cried tragically, "and all because of a cock and a hen pheasant." Social life, too, was interrupted. *Le Tout Paris* refrained from issuing dinner invitations lest they should clash with the first performance, and countermanded rooms engaged weeks beforehand in the Riviera hotels.

A final rumour to the effect that M. Rostand

had returned to Cambo by the 9.39 train—a train which, by the way, does not figure in the time-table. Another *canard* stating that M. Guitry had contracted typhoid fever through drinking water contaminated by the floods. A third Yellow *potin* reporting Madame Simone to have "mysteriously," "sensationally" disappeared. What chaos, what incoherency! And what a scene in the Porte St-Martin when at last, on Sunday night, 6th February, *Chantecler*, in the presence of the most brilliant audience yet assembled in a Paris theatre, came, crowed and conquered.

A new handsome curtain, new carpets, new velvet fauteuils, programmes printed on vellum, and red ribbons (also supplied by the management) in the grisly hair of the middle-aged *ouvreuses*. "I have been an *ouvreuse* for twenty years, but never have I seen an audience so vast, so animated, so *chic*," said one of these ladies to me as she bundled up my overcoat, pinned a ticket to it and dropped it on to the floor. "Not a peg left," she continued. "Immediately beneath your overcoat lies the overcoat of Prince Murat. In the heap next to it is a Rothschild overcoat. And as for that other pile of overcoats in the corner, all fur-lined, all magnificent, well, they belong to ambassadors, dukes, American millionaires, English milords, famous writers, politicians, jockeys—all the great personages in the world. Thus, although it lies on the floor, your overcoat is in illustrious company." After warning me

that no one would be admitted into the theatre when the curtain had risen, the *ouvreuse* showed me to my seat, held out her hand, was rewarded, and left me free to admire the jewels, feathers, dresses and coiffures of *le Tout Paris*. All eyes—or rather opera-glasses—on the box occupied by Madame Rostand and her two sons. In another box, M. Briand, the Prime Minister. In the stalls, Academicians, generals, playwrights, critics, newspaper proprietors, aviators, financiers, leading actors and actresses. Everyone afoot, or rather on tip-toe, gossiping, laughing, singling out celebrities with their glasses. But at ten minutes to nine o'clock the three traditional thuds made by a mallet behind the curtain (the signal in French theatres that the play is about to begin) caused a hush. Everyone sat down. "*Chantecler* at last," said, emotionally, a lady behind me. The curtain rose two or three inches. "*Pas encore, pas encore*," cried a voice. Consternation, dismay of *le Tout Paris*; was the play again to be postponed, was it true that M. Rostand had taken that 9.39 train, and that Madame Simone had "sensationally" disappeared, and that M. Guitry—— "*Pas encore, pas encore!*" But it was—thank heaven—only the voice of M. Jean Coquelin who appeared in the front of the stalls in a dress-suit, mounted a footstool and recited the prologue to M. Rostand's fantastic, symbolical *chef-d'œuvre*.

It was a delightfully humorous description of the feathered inhabitants of a farm-yard; and as M. Jean

Coquelin continued to harangue the audience eloquently from his footstool, the animals were heard becoming impatient on the hidden stage.

A crowing of cocks. A cackling of geese. The stamping of a horse's hoof. The creaking of an old cart. The bray of a donkey. The miaow of a cat. The hoot of an owl. The whistle of a blackbird. Then—distinctly—three taps from a woodpecker: "*le bec d'un pivert a frappé les trois coups*"; and with a cry of "The woodpecker says the play must commence," M. Coquelin disappeared, down went the lights: and up amidst thunders of applause rose the curtain.

. . . .

Before us, a farm-yard, not an inmate or an object of which is wanting. White, black, grey and brown hens strut hither and thither, sharply discussing the powers, vanities, infidelities of Chantecler, their lord and master. Ducks and drakes, ganders and geese take sides for or against the king of the yard. Now and again the lid of a vast wickerwork basket opens, to reveal the head of the Old Hen—a very old hen, the doyenne of the place, and Chantecler's foster-mother. In her, of course, the cock finds an ardent defender; but whenever the withered old head protrudes from the basket the Blackbird, hopping about in his cage, holds forth mockingly, ironically. For the Blackbird, like every other feathered creature in the play, is symbolical. He represents the smart, shallow, cynical Parisian, who scoffs at principles, ridicules genius, laughs at love, denies the exist-

ence of disinterested friendship, and is enormously pleased with his empty, impudent self. So he makes fun of the Old Hen and of the white, black, grey and brown hens whilst they pay naïve tributes to the supreme genius of Chantecler—the Cock of Cocks, the superb creature whose clarion, peremptory call causes the sun to rise and makes the world radiant, beautiful and cheerful. Chantecler has betrayed the hens, but they nevertheless admire and love him. As the discussion continues, bees, butterflies, wasps fly across the stage. On a pillar, a cat dozes tranquilly in the sun. Two fluffy little chicks play at getting in and out of a gigantic sabot. To the right, a huge dog's kennel; in the background a gigantic cart, with its shafts in the air. In a corner, a set of enormous harness. The birds and beasts being of Brobdingnagian sizes, the objects on the stage have been magnified in proportion. But all is natural; never, from first to last, a note of extravagance, grotesqueness. Well, on and on goes the discussion, and, as the Blackbird sneers and scoffs, it becomes heated and shrill. "Silence; here he comes, here he comes," cries a pigeon. And not a sound is heard when Chantecler appears, solemn, majestic, arrogant, on the poultry-yard wall. The hens gather together, look up at him with submission, admiration. The two chicks stop their game. The cat wakes up. Even the Blackbird ceases hopping about in his cage. Magnificent, awe-inspiring, indeed, is Chantecler in his dark green and light brown

feather dress—"the green of April and the ochre of October." He is, as on the top of the wall he recites his *Hymn to the Sun*, Cyrano de Bergerac in feathers. He represents the artist, the creative genius, the dispenser of beauty and spiritual light. If he be the lord over the other denizens of the farm-yard, it is because they will have it so. They believe the sun rises because Chantecler summons it with his shrill, imperious "Cocorico." And Chantecler, the Superb, believes it himself—believes it in spite of the sceptical Blackbird. Chantecler, in fact, might stand for a great many types besides the artistic; for example, the statesman who fancies he is the creator of the social reforms that are advancing with civilisation like a tide. "I adore thee, O sun," begins Chantecler, his beak raised towards the skies.

> Je t'adore, Soleil ! ô toi dont la lumière,
> Pour bénir chaque front et mûrir chaque miel,
> Entrant dans chaque fleur et dans chaque chaumière
> Se divise et demeure entière
> Ainsi que l'amour maternel !
>
> . . . .
>
> Je t'adore, Soleil ! Tu mets dans l'air des roses,
> Des flammes dans la source, un dieu dans le buisson !
> Tu prends un arbre obscur, et tu l'apothéoses !
> O Soleil ! toi sans qui les choses
> Ne seraient que ce qu'elles sont !

Night falls, and Chantecler sends his subjects to bed. Then he and Patou, the dog philosopher, discuss the situation in the farm-yard. Excellent Patou might be Anatole France's M. Bergeret. He despises the pert, cynical Blackbird. He

denounces the snobbishness, the vanity, the vulgarity of the age. He is for calm, for reflection, for—— A shot is heard, the Hen Pheasant flies in and implores Chantecler to protect her from the hunter. She nestles under the Cock's wing; she looks up at him admiringly, tenderly—and proud, gallant, idealistic Chantecler there and then falls in love with the gorgeous black, gold and red Pheasant. Majestically Chantecler struts round and round her, his chest thrown outwards, his beak in the air. Curiously, somewhat disdainfully, the Hen Pheasant surveys the farm-yard. It strikes her as poor, sordid, such an obscure little corner of the world. How different from the beauty, the spaciousness, the grandeur of her forest!

La Faisane. Mais tous ces objets sont pauvres et moroses!
Chantecler. Moi, je n'en reviens pas du luxe de ces choses!
La Faisane. Tout est toujours pareil, pourtant.
Chantecler. Rien n'est pareil,
Jamais, sous le soleil, à cause du soleil!
Car Elle change tout!
La Faisane. Elle . . . Qui?
Chantecler. La lumière.

Ardently, enthusiastically, then, Chantecler tells the Hen Pheasant how daylight, as it changes, floods the objects in the farm-yard with ever-varying colours. That geranium is never twice the same red. Patou's kennel, the sabot stuffed with straw, the rusty old pitchfork—not for two successive moments do they look the same. A rake in a corner, a flower in a vase, as they change colour in the rays of the sun, fill idealistic Chantecler with ecstasy.

Still, the Hen Pheasant is not very much impressed. She consents, nevertheless, to pass the night in Patou's kennel, which the dog-philosopher obligingly gives up to her. Owls, with huge, luminous eyes, appear. Bats dash about in the air. A mole creeps forth. As they love darkness and detest light, they fancy if Chantecler dies the night will last for ever. "I hate him," they say, one after another.—"Je commence à l'aimer," says the Hen Pheasant, womanlike, when she thus hears that Chantecler is in danger.

Owls, bats, the Cat, the Blackbird and strange night creatures are assembled beneath the branches of a huge tree, when the curtain rises on the second act. The Big Owl chants an Ode to the Night. "Vive la Nuit," cry his brethren, at intervals, in a hoarse chorus. It is determined that Chantecler must die. At five o'clock in the morning, when the Guinea-Fowl holds a reception, a terrific fighting-cock shall insult, attack and slay Chantecler. "Vive la Nuit," cry the night-birds, their eyes shining luridly in the darkness. But when a "Cocorico" sounds in the distance the night creatures fly away, and Chantecler, followed by the Hen Pheasant, struts on to the dim stage. "Tell me," pleads the Pheasant, "the secret of your power." At first Chantecler refuses, then hesitates, then in a glorious outburst he declares that the sun cannot rise until he has sung his song. It is perhaps the noblest, the most exquisite passage in the play.

Here is the last verse:

> Je pense à la lumière, et non pas à la gloire,
> Chanter, c'est ma façon de me battre et de croire.
> Et si de tous les chants mon chant est le plus fier,
> C'est que je chante clair afin qu'il fasse clair.

"But if," asks the Hen Pheasant, "the skies are clouded and grey?"

> *Chantecler.* Si le ciel est gris, c'est que j'ai mal chanté.
> *La Faisane.* Il est tellement beau, qu'il semble avoir raison.

Majestically, Chantecler struts to and fro beneath the branches of the trees. Humbly, admiringly, the Hen Pheasant watches his perambulations. Night has passed, daybreak is near; the skies above the hillock on which Chantecler is standing turn from black to purple, and next from purple to dark grey. "Look and listen," says Chantecler. He digs his claws firmly into the turf; he throws his chest out; he raises his head heavenwards: "Cocorico . . . Cocorico . . . Cocorico." And gradually, delicately, the skies light up; birds twitter, cottages stand out in the distance, the tramp of the peasant on his way to the fields tells that the day's work has begun—shafts of golden light fall upon the majestic Chantecler and illuminate the plumage of the graceful, beautiful Hen Pheasant.

And now, in a kitchen garden, the Guinea-Fowl's "five o'clock"—a worldly, fashionable reception—at five o'clock in the morning! It is a satire on elegant Paris *salons*; what tittle-tattle, what scandalmongering, what epigrams, paradoxes and puns! At a weather-stained old gate

stands the Magpie. One of the first guests he ceremoniously announces is the Peacock—the *grande dame*, to whom her hostess, the snobbish Guinea-Fowl, makes a profound curtsy. (The Peacock's tail is a miracle of ingenuity; the actress can spread it out fanwise, raise it, let it drop, at will.) Then, one after another, arrives an endless procession of cocks. "The Golden Cock; the Silver Cock; the Cock from Bagdad; the Cock from Cochin China; the Scotch Grey Cock; the Bantam Cock; the Cock without Claws; M. le Doyen of All the Cocks," announces the Magpie. Bows from these multitudinous Cocks to the Guinea-Fowl, to the Peacock and to the Blackbird. In all, forty-three amazing Cocks, each of whom is jealous of Chantecler; who eventually appears at the gateway with the Hen Pheasant. "Announce me, simply, as *the* Cock," proudly says Chantecler. "*Le* Coq," cries the Magpie. And the trouble begins.

Coldness from the Guinea-Fowl, scorn from the Peacock, mockery from the Blackbird, and insults from the Prize Fighting Cock, who has been commissioned by the uncanny, unwholesome Night Birds to slay idealistic, sun-loving Chantecler. Then, the duel, which ends in the victory of THE Cock, and the pain and humiliation of the prize-fighter. All the Cocks, from M. le Doyen down to the Cock without Claws, are dismayed. The Peacock is disgusted; the Guinea-Fowl is dejected at the wretched failure of her "five o'clock"—only the smart, irrepressible Blackbird keeps things

going. But not for long. Contemptuously, Chantecler turns upon him; taunts him with his vain, miserable endeavour to imitate the true, delightful wit, gaiety and genius of the Sparrow —the *gavroche*—of Paris. The Parisian Sparrow is flippant, but warm-hearted. He laughs, he scoffs, he whistles, he swaggers, but he is faithful and brave. But you, wretched Blackbird, are a coward. You, shallow creature, are a sneak. And then the line that would have rejoiced the heart of Victor Hugo: "Il faut savoir mourir pour s'appeler Gavroche."

A month passes. The last Act represents the Hen Pheasant's forest, where she and Chantecler are spending their honeymoon. For the bird has enticed the Cock away from the farm-yard; and thus, distress of his old foster-mother, and much indignation amongst the white, grey, brown and black hens.

Night in the forest, and how beautifully depicted! Up in a tree sits a solemn woodpecker; below him, around a huge mushroom, a number of toads with glistening eyes are assembled. Then, a gigantic cobweb, and in the middle of it, a spider. Here and there, rabbits peep out of their holes. Everywhere, birds. "It is time," says the solemn woodpecker to them, "for you to say your prayers."

Une Voix [*dans les arbres*]. Dieu des oiseaux! . . .
Une Autre Voix. Ou plutôt—car il sied avant tout de s'entendre
Et le vautour n'a pas le Dieu de la calandre!
Dieu des petits oiseaux! . . .

Mille Voix [*dans les feuilles*]. Dieu des petits oiseaux ! . . .
Une Autre Voix. Et vous, François, grand saint, bénisseur de nos ailes . . .
Toutes les Voix. Priez pour nous !
Une Voix. Obtenez-nous, François d'Assise,
Le grain d'orge . . .
La Seconde Voix. Le grain de blé . . .
D'autres Voix. Le grin de mil . . .
La Première Voix. Ainsi soit-il !
Toutes les Voix. Ainsi soit-il !

At length, when Chantecler appears, we perceive that there is something wrong with the Cock. "Does not my forest please you ?" asks the Hen Pheasant tenderly. "Oh yes," replies Chantecler half-heartedly. The fact is, he pines after the farm-yard. Every night in the forest he telephones to the Blackbird, through the flower of the bindweed, for news of his old foster-mother, the hens, the chicks, the dog Patou. Then the Hen Pheasant is jealous of his love for the sun. Cruelly, she has insisted that he is to crow only once every day.

But it is the Hen Pheasant's design to make Chantecler forget the dawn. He, of the farmyard, has never heard the song of the nightingale. So glorious are her notes that Chantecler, the poet, the idealist, will be enraptured by them—and lose count of time.

And the nightingale sings; and Chantecler, enthralled, listens attentively—and as he stands there, spellbound, beneath the nightingale's tree, —*the sun rises and lights up the forest.*

A peal of mocking laughter betrays the presence

of the Blackbird. So it is not the imperious "Cocorico" who summons the sun! So the day breaks without Chantecler's shrill crow! At first the Cock refuses to admit it: "That is the sun I summoned yesterday." But when his illusions are gone he returns, humbled but not despairing, to the farmyard. If he has not the supreme power to create the day, at least he can herald it.

When Chantecler has vanished, the Hen Pheasant, out of love for the Cock, deliberately flies into a trap set by the owner of the poultry yard. She remembers Chantecler having described the farmer as an admirable man:

> Car le propriétaire est un végétarien.
> C'est un homme étonnant. Il adore les bêtes.
> Il leur donne des noms qu'il prend dans les poètes.

So the farmer, after releasing the Hen Pheasant from the trap, will restore her to Chantecler.

More and more golden becomes the forest. A strident "Cocorico" from the distance announces Chantecler's return to the yard. When footsteps are heard, the birds stop singing. And the curtain falls.

It falls on a *chef-d'œuvre.*

X

AFTER *CHANTECLER*

MORE than a fortnight has passed since I witnessed the dress rehearsal of *Chantecler*: and what an odd, what an exhausting fortnight it has been! First of all dreams—or rather nightmares. Strangely, preposterously, I am majestic, cock-crowing "Chantecler" himself. A few minutes later, with wild, delirious rapidity, I turn into the Blackbird. M. Rostand's Blackbird can hop in and out of his cage, and mingle with the hens, the ducks, the fluffy little chicks, and the other feathered creatures in the farm-yard; but I—am a prisoner in my cage—no one heeds my cries, no one releases me, and to add to my panic huge owls with shining eyes gather around my cage and hoot lugubriously at me.

Nor is this all. I get hopelessly entangled in the gigantic cobweb, which is one of the most wonderful scenic effects of the Fourth Act (the "Hen Pheasant's Forest") of *Chantecler*. Also I stumble over the great toadstools, fall heavily to the ground; and the gorgeous Hen Pheasant herself appearing, I feel humiliated and ashamed that so elegant and beautiful a creature should find me sprawling thus awkwardly on the turf.

"What a nuisance these toadstools are," I observe. "What are you doing in my forest? Leave it immediately," commands the Hen Pheasant. But I have sprained my ankle; impossible to rise, even to move. And I burst into tears, and I implore the beautiful Pheasant to pardon me, and then a great bat gets caught in my hair, and——

Enough. Although my sufferings in these nightmares have been acute, I have one thing to be thankful for. Up to now I have not been attacked, as "Chantecler" is in the Third Act, by a fierce, bloodthirsty Prize Fighting Cock.

Gracious goodness, this *Chantecler*! Rising unrefreshed from my troubled, restless sleep, I find, on the breakfast-table, letters from London, Birmingham, Manchester, which show that M. Edmond Rostand's masterpiece has interested those cities as much as it has agitated and excited Paris.

"My Dear Boy" (writes a frail, silver-haired and very charming old lady who gave me half-crowns in my schooldays),—"I live very much out of the world, as old people should do; but I confess to my curiosity having been aroused by a very peculiar play now being acted in Paris. I mean *Chantecler*, by a M. Edmond Rostand. It seems that the characters in it—if one can call them characters?—are animals. How very remarkable! I wonder how it can be done! Such things are seen, of course, in pantomimes (do you remember my taking you to Drury Lane Theatre

many, many years ago to see *Puss-in-Boots* ?). But the newspapers here say that this play is wonderfully natural, and full of true poetry and feeling. When you can spare half-an-hour, pray satisfy an old lady's curiosity by giving her an account of the piece."

Then, with innumerable dashes, exclamation marks, and words underlined, the following appeal from fascinating, lovely, irresistible Miss Ethel Tempest :—

"Of course, lucky man, you have seen *Chantecler*, and if you don't tell me all about it by return of post I shall never write to you, and never look at you, and never speak to you again. I don't want to know anything about the plot of the play, as I have read all about that in the papers. You have got to be a dear, and tell me about the hat that Madame Simone wears as the Hen Pheasant. It's made of straw and feathers, and it's going to be the rage in London. Sybil Osborne tells me chic Parisiennes are wearing it already. No; on second thoughts, send me all the fashionable illustrated papers that give sketches of the hat. As you're a man, you won't understand it. Mind, *all* the papers : you can't send enough. If you could get a special sketch done by one of your artist friends in the Latin Quarter, it would be lovely."

Well, of course I write to the gentle, kindly silver-haired lady who once took me to a Drury

Lane pantomime; and of course, too, I send illustrated papers—thirteen of them—to exquisite Miss Tempest, and ask Raoul Fauchois, a gay, sympathetic art student, to "do" me a sketch of the Hen Pheasant's straw hat. He consents, and I fancy he will keep his promise. "Naturally, the sketch is not for you," he says, at once wisely and poetically. "It is for one of those blonde English misses whose *chevelure*, so radiant, so golden, lights up the sombre streets of old London. You may rely upon me, *mon pauvre ami*. I understand; I know exactly how you feel—for I myself have had affairs of the heart."

Again, always from London and the provinces, requests for picture post cards of the principal scenes in *Chantecler*; for gilt brooches (3 f. 50 c. in the tawdry shops of the rue de Rivoli) representing "Chantecler" crowing and crowing with his chest thrown outwards and his beak raised heavenwards; for the Porte St-Martin theatre programme of *Chantecler*; and for—"if you possibly can manage it"—the autograph of M. Edmond Rostand.

And then a telegram:

"Wife and self arrive Gare du Nord Wednesday 5.45. Please meet us. Not understanding French wish you accompany us see and interpret *Chantecler*."

What worry, what exhaustion!

"Monsieur would be kind to explain this

extraordinary 'Chanteeler' to me. I am from the country, and have had much to do with poultry; but I have never seen a cock like Chanteeler," says my servant, a simple, naïve soul from Normandy.

Then my concierge, a practical lady: "But it's ridiculous, but it's mad! Cocks and hens cannot even speak, and yet this M. Rostand makes them recite poetry. What is France coming to? What will be the end of us all? Think, just think, what has been happening since the New Year. That sinister comet, the terrible floods, and now *Chantecler*."

Very unwisely, I explain to my servant and to my concierge that M. Rostand's glorious *chef-d'œuvre* is symbolical.

Chantecler is a symbolic play in verse.

The feathered creatures in the farm-yard represent human beings. "Chanteeler" himself is the artist, the idealist. The Hen Pheasant is the coquettish, seductive, brilliant woman of the world. The Blackbird——

But here I stop, silenced by the startled expression of the concierge and the servant. It is plain they think I have become irresponsible, light-headed. "Monsieur is tired. Monsieur should lie down and rest. Monsieur is not quite himself," says my servant.

"The comet—the floods—*Chantecler*, have been too much for Monsieur," sighs the concierge.

XI

AU COURS D'ASSISES. PARIS AND MADAME STEINHEIL

IT was not by reason of baccarat losses, duels, matrimonial disputes, nor because of the aches of indigestion nor of the indefinable miseries of neurasthenia, worries and ailments common enough in French Vanity Fair—it was not, I say, for any of these reasons that fashionable and financial Paris, sporting and theatrical Paris, certain worldly lights of literary and artistic Paris, and the extravagant, feverish *demi-monde* of Paris, woke up on the morning of the 3rd November [1] in an exceedingly bad temper. Nor yet was their displeasure occasioned by the weather—London weather—all fog, damp and gloom. The fact was, at noon was to begin the first sitting of the great Steinheil trial, to which the above-mentioned ornaments of *le Tout Paris* had been excitedly looking forward for many a month. All that time they had been worrying, agitating, intriguing to obtain the official yellow ticket that would entitle them to behold with their own eyes—O, dramatic, thrilling spectacle—the "Tragic Widow's" entrance into the dock, and to hear with their own ears—O palpitating,

[1] 1909.

overwhelming experience—the secret history of an essentially Parisian *cause célèbre.* The trial would be the event of the autumn season, a function no self-respecting *mondain, mondaine* or *demi-mondaine* could afford to miss. And so, as the accommodation in the Court of Assizes is limited, the campaign to secure cards of admission became ardent, fierce, and then (as the sensational day of the 3rd November approached) delirious. Off, by footmen, chauffeurs, special messengers, went scented little notes to judges and famous lawyers, and to deputies, senators and ministers, imploring those distinguished personages to "remember" the writer when the hour arrived for the precious yellow tickets to be distributed. "*Mon cher ami,*" wrote Madame la Comtesse de la Tour, "if you forget me I shall never, never forgive you." Then, with a blot or two, and in a primitive, scrawling handwriting, Mademoiselle Giselle de Perle of the half-world: "*Mon vieux gros,* I count upon you for the trial. If you fail me, your little blonde Pauline will show her claws. And the claws of this blonde child can be terrible." (It is shocking to think that blonde Giselle de Perle should be on such familiar terms with gentlemen in high places; but as a matter of fact she and her sisters play a very important rôle in the life of the Amazing City.) As for stout, diamond-covered Baronne Goldstein (wife of old bald-headed Goldstein of the Bourse), she invited judges and deputies to rich, elaborate dinners, at which the oldest, the mellowest, the most

N

comforting wines from her cellars were produced; and when M. le Juge and M. le Député had been rendered genial and benevolent by those rare, warming vintages, she led them into a corner of Goldstein's vast gilded *salon*, and there besought them, while breathing heavily under her breast-plate of diamonds, to procure for her "just one little yellow ticket." Naturally, all these State officials replied with a bow: "I will do my best. Need I say that it is my dearest desire to oblige you?" And our ornaments of *le Tout Paris* were satisfied; already regarded that ticket of tickets as being safe and sound in their possession. When October dawned, Madame la Comtesse, lively Pauline Boum and stout Baronne Goldstein ordered striking dresses and huge, complicated hats for the Steinheil *cause célèbre*. In their respective *salons*, over their "five o'clock's" of pale tea, sugared cakes, and crystal glasses of port, malaga and madeira, they excitedly described how they had driven to the tranquil, ivy-covered villa in the Impasse Ronsin where Madame Steinheil's husband and mother had been assassinated on the night of the 30th-31st May eighteen months ago. And how, after that expedition, they had proceeded to beautiful Bellevue, seven miles out of Paris, to stare at that other villa, the "Vert Logis," where the "Tragic Widow" received her lovers. How they gossiped, too, over the intrigue between the accused woman and the late President Félix Faure; and what fun they made of certain high State dignitaries

who were said to be in a state of "panic" because they had been habitués of the Steinheil villas! "I would not miss the trial for the largest and finest diamond in the world," declared these ladies. "It will be extraordinary, overwhelming, supreme," exclaimed the male guests at these tea-and-madeira afternoon parties. "We shall still be discussing it this time next year."

Suddenly, however, consternation, indignation, fury, hysteria, in *le Tout Paris*. In an official decree, M. de Valles, the judge appointed to preside over the Steinheil "debates," intimated that all those scented notes had been written, all those elaborate dinners had been given, all those striking dresses and complicated hats had been ordered, and tried on I don't know how many times—*in vain*. "I have," stated M. de Valles, "received over 25,000 applications for tickets of admission, and every one of them I have refused. Only the diplomatic corps, the Bar, and a certain number of French and foreign journalists will be admitted. Let it be clearly understood that this decision of mine is irrevocable." Gracious powers, the commotion! *Le Tout Paris* protested, raged, until it wore itself out with anger and hysteria. "I have made thousands of enemies. Even my wife's friends refuse to speak to me," said M. de Valles to an interviewer. True to his word, the judge remained inexorable. Passionate letters to him remained unanswered; to all visitors he was invisible. Hence the exceedingly bad temper of *le Tout Paris* on that foggy, gloomy

morning of the 3rd of November. And thus for the first time on record the heroine of an essentially Parisian *cause célèbre* entered the dock of the dim, oblong, oak-panelled Court of Assizes, secure from the laughter, the mockery, and the opera-glasses of French Vanity Fair.

. . . .

An extraordinary woman, Madame Steinheil. Imagine Sarah Bernhardt in some supremely tragical rôle — pathetic, threatening; tender, violent; despairing, tearful; wrecked with indignation, suffering and exhaustion, and you will gain an idea of the "Tragic Widow's" demeanour during the ten days' dramatic trial. Her voice, like the incomparable Sarah's, was now melodious and persuasive, then hoarse, bitter, frenzied; when she wept, it subsided into a moan or a broken whisper. Never even in Paris (where a widow's weeds are perhaps excessively lugubrious) have I seen deeper mourning: heavy crape bands round the accused woman's black dress, stiff crape bows in the widow's cap, a deep crape border to the handkerchief which she clenched tightly, convulsively, in her black-gloved hand. Then, under her eyes, dark, dark shadows, which turned green as the trial tragically wore on. Her face, deadly pale, but for the hectic spot burning fiercely in each cheek. Her eyes, blue. Her hair, dark brown. Her ears, small and delicate; her mouth, sensitive, tremulous, eloquent. Her only *coquetterie*, the low, square-cut opening in the neck of her dress.

Wistfully, wretchedly, she glanced around the

court, after M. de Valles, the presiding judge, had given her permission to sit down. Then her eyes fell upon a grim table placed immediately beneath the Bench: and she shuddered. It was grim because it contained the *pièces à conviction*—the alpenstock found near the late M. Steinheil's body, the coil of rope with which he and his mother-in-law had been strangled, the famous bottle of brandy with the innumerable finger-prints, the wadding lying on the floor by the side of Madame Japy's bed. Then, M. de Valles, in his rasping voice, asked the "Tragic Widow" the usual preliminary questions concerning her parentage, domicile and age. Almost inaudibly, Madame Steinheil replied. And the trial began.

Unfortunately, I have neither the space nor the time at my disposal to render even a tolerably satisfactory account of this overwhelming *cause célèbre.* "Impressions" are all I can offer, mixed up with brief descriptions of what the French journalist calls "incidents in court"; and even these "impressions" and "incidents" must necessarily be compressed and disconnected. For the slightness of my recital, I beg the indulgence of my readers.

"Messieurs les Jurés, I swear I am innocent. Messieurs les Jurés, I adored my mother. Messieurs les Jurés, do not believe the abominable things the President is saying about me," was the "Tragic Widow's" first passionate outburst. Then, turning round upon M. de Valles: "You are treating me atrociously."

"I am treating you as you deserve," was the reply.

For the first two days, M. de Valles assumed the office of public prosecutor, or rather of high inquisitor—and the "Tragic Widow" was on the rack. The judge in the black-and-red robes sneered, stormed, threatened, bullied; and turned constantly to the jury with a shrug of the shoulders as though to say: "She denies everything. She has never told anything but lies, and now she is lying again." Over again and again he brutally accused Madame Steinheil of having assassinated her mother, but never did the accused woman fail to leap up from her chair with the cry: "I adored my mother. Messieurs les Jurés, I swear I adored her." Another shrug of M. de Valles' shoulders, and another cynical smile at the jury, when Madame Steinheil spoke of her devotion to her eighteen-year-old daughter. "I love her, and she loves me more fondly than ever —because she believes in my innocence. She has written me the tenderest letters and has visited me constantly in prison. She helped to make the black dress I am wearing." And further gestures expressive of impatient incredulity on the part of M. de Valles when the "Tragic Widow" shrieked: "Yes; I have been a bad woman. Yes; I have been an immoral woman. Yes; I made false, wicked accusations against Remy Couillard and Alexandre Wolff. But I am not an assassin, a fiend. And only a fiend could murder her mother." Here the shriek stopped. For

some moments the "Tragic Widow" cried bitterly. Then, in Sarah Bernhardt's melodious voice, she thus addressed the jury: "Gentlemen, I am deeply repentant for all the wrong I have done. Please realise that I was mad—that I was being tortured—when I made those false, atrocious accusations. I was being tortured by the examining magistrate and by the journalists who invaded my villa and refused to leave it until they had obtained sensational 'copy' for their papers. These journalists told me that nobody believed in my story, and that I had better tell a new one. They said my villa was surrounded by a hostile mob, come there to lynch me. It was they who suggested that I should accuse Alexandre Wolff and Remy Couillard. They tortured me until they made me say what they liked. It was no doubt splendid material for their papers: but the result was disastrous for me. Do you know, gentlemen of the jury, that it was actually in a motor car belonging to the *Matin* that I was driven to the St Lazare prison?" And the "Tragic Widow" collapsed in her chair, covered her face with her hand, sobbed convulsively. At this point the two or three hundred barristers in court murmured compassionately: and M. de Valles called them to order by rapping his paper-cutter on his massive silver inkstand. (M. de Valles, by the way, was for ever rapping his paper-cutter, for ever wiping his brow with a huge handkerchief, for ever sinking back in his handsome, comfortable fauteuil, and then suddenly

darting forward to hurl some savage remark at the accused.) Irritated by the compassionate demonstration of the barristers, unmoved by the shaking and sobbing of the black-dressed woman in the dock, M. de Valles pointed to the grim table containing the *pièces de conviction*, and cried: "Look at that horrible table, and confess; and shed real, not crocodile, tears. You have stated that on the night of the crime you were bound down and gagged by three men in black robes and by a red-headed woman, who entered your room with a dark lantern and then—after they had bound and gagged you, and after you yourself had lost consciousness—assassinated poor M. Steinheil and the unfortunate Madame Japy. Nobody believes you; your story is a tissue of falsehoods. It was you who, with the help of accomplices, murdered your husband and your mother."

But let us not be too hard upon M. de Valles for his savage treatment of Madame Steinheil. He had considerately protected her from the cruel curiosity and impertinence of *le Tout Paris*; and then it was his legitimate rôle to attempt by continuous ruthless bullying to extract a confession from his pale-faced, exhausted martyr. For in France the word "judge," as we understand it, is a misnomer. The French judge is the real public prosecutor, the chief cross-examiner; save for the jury, he would be all-powerful. But as the twelve men "good and true" are chosen from the justice-loving French people at large, M. le Juge's drastic, brutal insinuations and

accusations cannot alone bring about a condemnation. It is for the jury to decide. It remains with the jury to condemn. And at one o'clock in the morning of the 14th November the jurors in the Steinheil *cause célèbre*—workmen, mechanics, *petits commercants*—demonstrated their inherent love and sense of justice by——

But I am anticipating events. Let us return to the crowded, stifling Court of Assizes; and then take a stroll in the marble corridors of the Paris Law Courts, where, throughout the Steinheil trial, wooden barriers barred the way to all those not provided with the precious yellow ticket; and where groups of policemen, and of Municipal and Republican Guards were discussing—like every other soul in Paris—this incomprehensible, amazing *cause célèbre*.

A change in M. de Valles on the third day of the trial. Respecting her tears, refraining from shrugging his shoulders at her repeated protestations of innocence, the judge treated the "Tragic Widow" as a human being; even with courtesy and compassion. This metamorphosis was due, I believe, to a hint received from high quarters, where (so I have since been assured) the strong protests of the Paris correspondents of the English and American newspapers against the French judicial system, had made an impression. But in the opinion of Henri Rochefort, Madame Steinheil's savage assailant in the columns of the Nationalist *Patrie*, the "judge had been bought." With his gaunt, yellow face, tumbled white hair,

angry grey eyes, the ruthless old journalist and agitator was the most conspicuous figure in the press-box. To his colleagues and to the barristers around him, he also accused Madame Steinheil of having murdered the late Félix Faure. "She was in the pay of the Dreyfusards," he said, in his hoarse voice, "and the Dreyfusards knew that so long as Faure lived there would be no revision. So they commissioned the woman Steinheil, his mistress, to assassinate him." After which he sucked lozenges (fierce old Rochefort is always and always sucking lozenges in order to ease the hoarseness in his throat), and next proceeded to begin his article for the *Patrie*, in which he referred to Madame Steinheil as the "Black Panther"! I fancy, too, that it was Rochefort's bold design to magnetise—even to mesmerise—the jury! At all events, when not writing or accusing, he kept his angry grey eyes fixed hard on the foreman. A good thing the "Tragic Widow" could not see him from her seat in the dock. Henri Rochefort's gaunt yellow face, when lit up luridly with hatred and vindictiveness, is enough to make anyone falter and quail.

But as M. de Valles was calm, Madame Steinheil felt more at ease; and, apart from occasional tears and comparatively few outbursts, the "Tragic Widow" remained composed during the six long, stifling afternoons occupied by the evidence of the eighty-seven witnesses. Of these, of course, I can take only the most important. Let us begin

with Mr Burlingham, an American painter and journalist, aged twenty-eight.

Poor, poor Mr Burlingham! It will be remembered that Madame Steinheil described the assassins of her husband and mother as three men in black robes, and a red-headed woman. Well, just because Mr Burlingham had hired a black robe from a costumier's for a fancy-dress ball a few nights before the murder, he was suspected, shadowed and worried by the detective police. One day the police stationed Madame Steinheil outside his door, and when he sauntered out and walked off, the "Tragic Widow" exclaimed: "Yes, that is one of the assassins. I recognise him by his red beard." But as on the night of the murder Mr Burlingham was far away in Switzerland with two friends on a walking-tour, he had no difficulty in establishing a decisive *alibi*. Nevertheless, Mr Burlingham became notorious. His photographs appeared in the newspapers. He was followed here, there and everywhere by Yellow Reporters: who described him as the "enigmatic Burlingham," and the "sinister Burlingham"—and yet Mr Burlingham, with his light red beard, gentle green eyes, low voice and kindly expression is, in reality, the simplest and mildest-looking mortal that ever breathed. What humiliations, what indignities, nevertheless, had Mr Burlingham to endure! His landlord gave him notice, his tradespeople ceased calling for orders; when out walking in the neighbourhood he inhabited, concierges ex-

claimed: "There goes the famous Burlingham," while little boys cried: "Here comes the sinister Burlingham." Once, after calling on a friend who was out, he left his name with the concierge—and the concierge, panic-stricken, fled her lodge, and, rushing into the next house, breathlessly told her neighbour that she had seen the "terrible Burlingham." In fact, an intolerable time of it for mild, simple Mr Burlingham.

"I have narrowly escaped the guillotine," were his first words to the judge; and the Court laughed. The American should have engaged an interpreter: his French and his accent were deplorable. "This Steinheil affair is not clear," he continued, naïvely, and everyone shook with delight. "I am very sorry you have been so badly treated," said M. de Valles, "but you fell under suspicion because you had eccentric habits, and mixed with eccentric people." M. de Valles' idea of "eccentric" habits and "eccentric" people was in itself eccentric. For Mr Burlingham's friends and associates during his sojourn in Paris have been painters, sculptors, and journalists of talent and honourable standing. As for his habits, they have been those of a firm believer in the "simple life." Sandals for Mr Burlingham; no hat; terrific walking-tours. Then a diet of rice, grapes and nuts. (In the buffet of the Law Courts Mr Burlingham, when invited to take a "drink," ordered grapes: he consumed I don't know how many bunches a day, to the stupefaction of the waiters and customers.) Well, after having re-

ceived apologies from the judge, Mr Burlingham received those of counsel for the defence and the prosecution. "Excuses are scarcely enough," replied the witness; "I should like to say something about the French judicial system." At which, M. de Valles, rapping his paper-cutter, sternly requested simple, unfortunate Mr Burlingham to "retire."

Murmurs, exclamations, excitement in court when M. Marcel Hutin, of the *Echo de Paris*, and MM. Labruyère and Barby, of the *Matin*—the three journalists who bullied and "tortured" Madame Steinheil in the Impasse Ronsin Villa on the night previous to her arrest—strode up to the short wooden bar that takes the place, in France, of a witness-box.

No confusion, no shame about them; and yet their conduct in the drawing-room of the Steinheil villa twelve months ago was despicable. Calmly they admitted having advised the "Tragic Widow" to "tell a new story," as no one in Paris believed in her account of how the double crime had been committed. They also admitted having lied to the wretched woman, when they had told her that the villa was surrounded by a hostile mob, "come there to lynch her." Madame Steinheil, they continued, was exhausted, out of her mind. She called for strychnine, with which to poison herself. Downstairs in the kitchen the cook, Mariette Wolff, was discovered on her knees, striving to cut open the tube of the gas-stove—to asphyxiate herself. The cook then produced a

revolver, and cried: "Here is the only means of salvation." Later on, tea was served in the drawing-room. M. Marcel Hutin and his two colleagues continued to browbeat Madame Steinheil. One of the Yellow Reporters cried: "I shall not leave this house until I know the truth." Mariette Wolff entered the drawing-room and tried to soothe her mistress. And——

"So you tortured Madame Steinheil in her drawing-room. You drank her tea. You were her guests, she was your hostess," interrupted M. de Valles, scathingly, indignantly. The "Tragic Widow," leaning forward on the ledge of the dock, looked gratefully, thankfully, at the judge. The three Yellow Reporters strode out of court, each of them provoking angry exclamations from the barristers as they importantly passed by.

And then, the cook—Mariette Wolff, who had been in Madame Steinheil's service for over twenty years; and who, according to the Yellow Press, "possessed all the secrets of the palpitating Steinheil Mystery." Henri Rochefort, M. Arthur Meyer (director of the *Gaulois*, very Jewish in appearance, but a strong Anti-Semite and an ardent Catholic in politics), Madame Séverine (the famous woman journalist), four very charming lady barristers, all their male confrères—everyone, in fact, sprang up excitedly when Mariette made her long-expected appearance. She has since been described as a peasant out of one of Zola's novels, and as "the double of Balzac's fiendish Cousine

Bette." She has also been termed "a fury," and "a rat" and "a monster." For my part, when first I saw her through the open door of the witness-room, sipping a steaming grog and chatting and laughing with her son Alexandre, I summed her up as the French double of a typical English charwoman. She was wearing a battered black bonnet and a seedy black dress, and came to me more as a Dickensonian than a Zolaesque or a Balzacien character. But Mariette, happily drinking grog, and Mariette, facing a jury and judge, are two very different persons. In court, Madame Steinheil's ex-cook was defiant, vindictive, violent. As she defended her former mistress, her beady, black eyes flashed, her chin and nose almost met—her yellow, knotted hand beat the air. Yes, she was a "fury"; yes—to use the French journalist's pet epithet—she looked "sinister." And, oh dear me, her abuse of the Yellow Reporters! Mariette's crude language cannot be reproduced here. It became particularly strong when she related how she had ordered MM. Hutin, Barby and Labruyère out of the Impasse Ronsin Villa. It grew even stronger when she denied their allegations that she intended first of all to asphyxiate herself, and then to blow out her brains. She denied everything. "My mistress is innocent," she cried. "She accused my son Alexandre of being a murderer, but it was those —— journalists who made her do that, and I forgive her: and so does Alexandre." True, Alexandre Wolff, a horse-dealer's assistant, with

huge red hands and a neck like a bullock's, told M. de Valles he bore Madame Steinheil "no grudge." And the "Tragic Widow," leaning forward, murmured melodiously: "Thank you, Alexandre."

Full of incoherencies, contradictions, was the evidence of Remy Couillard, the late M. Steinheil's valet, into whose pocket-book the "Tragic Widow" had placed the incriminating pearl. "I bear her no grudge," blurted out the young man. "I beg your pardon, Remy," said Madame Steinheil, always melodiously, when the valet (attired, since he was accomplishing his "military service," in a cavalry uniform) withdrew. But, a moment later, she fell back in her chair, closed her eyes; and the black-gloved hands in her lap twitched convulsively, madly.

M. Borderel had stepped forward to give evidence: M. Borderel, the lover Madame Steinheil had declared twelve months ago to the examining magistrate to be the one and only man she had ever truly loved.

A hush in court as the middle-aged, red-eyed, broken-down widower from the beautiful country of the Ardennes, related the history of his intrigue with the "Tragic Widow."

It will be remembered that the strongest point for the prosecution was that Madame Steinheil had murdered her husband in order to be free to marry "the rich châtelain, M. Borderel." In a slow, solemn voice, M. Borderel stated: "Yes; Madame Steinheil did mention marriage to me,

but I said it was impossible. I adored my late wife, I adore my children, and I felt I could not give them a step-mother; and Madame Steinheil fully understood that my decision was irrevocable. Therefore the assumption of the prosecution that Madame Steinheil murdered her husband in order to become my wife, is unwarrantable." Here M. Borderel broke down. "I loved her. I was a widower. I was free. In becoming her lover, I behaved no more wrongly than thousands of my fellow-countrymen. It is a base lie that I ever suspected her of being guilty of that awful murder. On the morning after the crime, I was full of the deepest pity for her; and when she was accused in the newspapers I passionately told everyone she was innocent." Up sprang Maître Aubin, counsel for the defence, with the cry: "Do you still believe her innocent?" And loudly, vigorously, whole-heartedly rang forth the answer: "With all my soul, with all my heart, upon my conscience."

Even M. de Valles was moved by M. Borderel's emotion, sorrow, chivalry. The disclosure of the "rich châtelain's" *liaison* with the "Tragic Widow" caused such a scandal in the Ardennes that M. Borderel had to sell his estate; and he, too, has been persecuted continuously by Yellow photographers and journalists. Equally chivalrous was the evidence of Comte d'Arlon (to whose house Madame Steinheil was removed after the night of the murder), of M. Martin (a State official), and of other gentlemen who had been (platonic)

friends of the "Tragic Widow." Then, more chivalry from M. Pouce, an officer in the detective police. "I have been one of the detectives in charge of the Steinheil affair," he cried. "But I have always believed in the innocence of Madame Steinheil. Had she told me she was guilty, I should not have believed her. She is innocent." And finally, exuberant, fantastic chivalry on the part of a young man named René Collard: who, to the stupefaction of the Court, walked up to the Bench and cried: "Madame Steinheil is innocent. I myself am the red-headed woman who helped to commit the double murder." M. de Valles then wiped his brow with his huge handkerchief, rapped on the silver inkstand with his paper-cutter, and cried: "Silence"—for the Court was buzzing with excitement. Hesitatingly René Collard (aged perhaps nineteen) related that he had disguised himself as a woman, bought a red wig, broken his way into the Steinheil villa (in the company of two friends), sacked the place, bound and gagged Madame Steinheil, strangled her husband, suffocated her mother. "Take this young man away," said M. de Valles to a municipal guard, "and lock him up." Two nights in prison brought young René Collard to his senses. He had seen Madame Steinheil's photographs in the papers, had fallen in love with her: had resolved to save her at the risk of being guillotined by the awful M. Deibler! Said the examining magistrate: "Little idiot, I shall now send you home in the charge of a policeman, who will deliver you over

to your parents." And so, amorous, over-chivalrous young René Collard was conducted back to a dull, bourgeois flat in the Avenue Clichy, where his father and mother, after calling him a "villain," a "criminal," and a "monster," took him into their arms, and hugged him, and called him "the best and most adorable of sons"; and then sent out Amélie, the only servant, to fetch a cream cake and a bottle of sweet champagne with which to celebrate the return home of the "wicked" but "adorable" Master René.

And now, half-past ten o'clock at night on Saturday, the 13th of November.—I have passed over the address to the jury of M. Trouard-Riolle, the Public Prosecutor—a mere repetition of the judge's savage cross-examination of the "Tragic Widow" on the first two days of the trial; and I have also passed over Maître Aubin's long, eloquent speech for the defence. And the last scenes I have now to describe rise up so vividly before me, that I adopt the present tense.

The jury have retired to an upstairs room to consider their verdict. Madame Steinheil, watched by municipal guards, is waiting—deadly pale, green shadows under her blue eyes, exhausted, a wreck—in the "Chambre des Accusés." And in the stifling Court of Assizes, and in the cold marble corridors of the Palais de Justice, barristers, journalists and a few ornaments of *le Tout Paris* (who, somehow or other, have at last obtained admittance to the Law Courts) are frantically speculating upon the fate of Madame Steinheil.

Most barristers say: "There are no proofs whatsoever. Therefore, acquittal." The *Tout Paris* cries: "She should be imprisoned for life." (And here, in yet another parenthesis, let us suggest that the *Tout Paris*' mocking, vindictive attitude towards Madame Steinheil is provoked by malevolent jealousy. Madame la Comtesse, lively Pauline Boum, stout Baronne Goldstein cannot forgive the "Tragic Widow" for having been *une femme ultra-chic*—the favourite of the late President Félix Faure. Yet, as we all know in Paris, the life of these ladies is very far from exemplary. How terrifically would our great, kindly, satirical Thackeray have laid bare the true causes of the bitter hostility directed against the "Tragic Widow" by French Vanity Fair!)

Eleven o'clock; half-past eleven; midnight. Twice, so we hear, have M. de Valles and counsel for the prosecution and the defence been summoned to the jurors' room, to explain certain "points." The *Tout Paris*, and Henri Rochefort, are jubilant. "When the jury sends for the judge it usually means a conviction," croaks Rochefort, rubbing his hands, and still sucking his impotent lozenges. We hear, too, that a crowd of thousands has assembled in front of the Palais de Justice; that the boulevards are wild with excitement, and——

"The judge has been summoned a third time to the jurors' room," we are told at twenty minutes past twelve.

"Five years' imprisonment at least," chuckle the ladies and fatuous gentlemen of *le Tout Paris*.

"Ten years—fifteen—twenty, I hope. She was in the pay of the Dreyfusards, and killed Félix Faure," mutters Rochefort.

"The Court enters; the Court enters," cry the ushers and the municipal guards, at half-past twelve.

As the jury files into the box, barristers and journalists mount their benches, and, upon those rickety supports, sway to and fro. "Silence," shouts M. de Valles, rapping his paper-cutter for the last time. His question to the foreman of the jury is inaudible. But the reply rings out firmly, vigorously:

"Before God and man, upon my honour and conscience, the verdict on every count of the indictment is: Not Guilty."

For a few seconds, silence. Then a shrill cry (from one of the brown-haired, blue-eyed, very charming lady barristers) of "Acquitted!" And after that, enthusiastic uproar. Rocking and swaying to and fro on their rickety benches, the barristers applaud, cheer, fling their black *képis* into the air. Up, too, go the caps of their fascinating, brown-haired colleagues, as they cry: "Bravo." More shouts and bravoes from the journalists. (One of them—an Englishman—cheers so frantically that half-an-hour later his voice is as hoarse as Henri Rochefort's.) And so the din continues, increases, until the demonstrators suddenly perceive the dock is empty. Again, for a second or two, silence, followed by exclamations of astonishment, alarm. M. de

Valles, the two assistant judges, and the jurors lean forward. Maître Aubin looks anxious. Where is the "Tragic Widow"? Is she ill? Is she——? But at last the small door at the back of the dock opens, and Madame Steinheil, livid, held by either arm by a municipal guard, staggers forward. She has not yet heard the verdict, but the renewed wild cheering (which drowns the judge's voice as he addresses her) tells her what it is. Dazed, half-fainting in the doorway, she looks around the Court. For the first time throughout the ten days' trial she smiles—heavens, the relief, the gratitude, the softness of that smile! And then amidst shouts of "Vive Madame Steinheil," and of "Vive la Justice," the "Tragic Widow" falls unconscious into the arms of the *Gardes Municipaux* and is carried out backwards through the narrow doorway of the dock.

Paris, too, demonstrates excitedly. Cheers are given by the vast crowd assembled outside the Law Courts for Madame Steinheil, Maître Aubin and the jury. M. Trouard-Riolle, the public prosecutor, leaves the Palais de Justice by a side door, followed by Henri Rochefort, yellower than ever in the face, his eyes blazing with vindictive fury. Almost encircling the Palais are the 60 and 90 h.p. motors of the Yellow Reporters, still bent on pursuing and persecuting the "Tragic Widow." But she evades them; passes what remains of the night in the Hotel Terminus; speeds off in an automobile to a doctor's private nursing-home at Vésinet next morning.

Acquitted, yes; but by no means rehabilitated, far less left in peace. Outside the nursing-home at Vésinet, behold rows of motor cars, packs of Yellow Reporters and photographers. A din in this usually tranquil country place; a din, too, outside the Impasse Ronsin Villa, and in front of the Bellevue Villa, where inquisitive Parisians jest, and laugh, and point and stare at the shuttered windows. Over those "five o'clock's" of pale tea, port and sugared cakes, *le Tout Paris* declares that Madame Steinheil was acquitted by order of the Government. In the *Patrie*, Henri Rochefort still calls her the "Black Panther," and, alluding once again to the death of Félix Faure, bids President Fallières to beware of her. And on the boulevards, swarms of *camelots* thrust under one's eyes "picture post cards" of Mariette Wolff; of huge, bloated Alexandre; of mild Mr Burlingham; of chivalrous Count d'Arlon; of M. Borderel; of Mademoiselle Marthe Steinheil; and of the "Tragic Widow."

And the bourgeoisie?

"Acquitted, yes; but the Impasse Ronsin crime, committed eighteen months ago, remains a mystery," says a Parisian angrily to me. "The trial has elucidated nothing: but it has cost enormous sums." And then, as he is a thrifty, rather parsimonious little bourgeois, the speaker adds indignantly: "As Madame Steinheil has won, it is the Treasury, in other words the unfortunate taxpayer, myself, for instance, who will have to put his hand in his pocket, and settle the bill."

XII

THE LATE JULES GUÉRIN AND THE DEFENCE OF FORT CHABROL

THE month of May, 1899—how long ago it seems!

At that time, up at Montmartre, in a large house, overlooking a garden, resided M. Jules Guérin, most savage of Anti-Dreyfusards, and chief of the Anti-Semitic party.

A fine house, but an unlovely garden. A gaunt tree or two; four or five gritty, stony flower-beds; in a corner, a dried-up, dilapidated old well. But this waste of a garden suited M. Guérin's purposes,—which were sinister.

"If my enemies attack me here, I shall shoot them dead and bury them beneath this very window—by that tree, in that flower-bed."

"Oh!" I expostulated.

"Or I shall throw their infamous bodies into that well," continued M. Guérin, again pointing out of the window. "I am prepared; I am ready. You see this gun? Then look at those revolvers. All are loaded."

A long, highly polished gun rested in a corner at M. Guérin's elbow. Curiously then I glanced at a collection of revolvers that bristled murderously on the wall, and next at Jules Guérin, a

powerfully built man, with massive shoulders, a square chin, lurid green eyes, a fierce moustache, and a formidable block of a head on which a soft grey hat of enormous dimensions was tilted jauntily on one side. Thus, although he sat in his study before a vast, business-like writing-table, Jules Guérin wore his hat, or rather his sombrero, and also an overcoat; but then (as he explained) he might be called out at any moment to take part in a political brawl, or to chastise a journalist, or to arrange a duel—even to dig the grave of an enemy; and so was dressed ready to sally forth anywhere, and with ferocious designs upon anyone, at the shortest notice. Vehemently, he puffed at a cigarette. Now and again he pulled at his fierce moustache. As he spoke he gesticulated, thumped the writing-table savagely, and, when he thumped, the ink-bottles and penholders leapt and danced, and the gun in the corner trembled.

"Downstairs I have twenty clerks and assistants. All are armed with revolvers; all are devoted; and thus my enemies are their enemies. And so if the brigands attack us, into the earth with them, or into the well, or into——"

"But who are these enemies?" I interrupted. "These brigands?"

"The Government—Lépine, Chief of the Police—Loubet, President of the Republic—a hundred other traitors and assassins," cried M. Guérin. "But the garden is waiting for them. I desire that this garden shall be their cemetery."

Of course, an impossible ambition. But so incoherent, so chaotic was the state of mind of the Anti-Semites fourteen years ago, that I refrained from suggesting that it was highly improbable President Loubet or his Ministers would invade M. Guérin's bit of waste ground up there in the rue Condorcet. Nor was my host a man to stand ridicule. A flippant word from me, and he would have shown me the door. So I listened patiently to his wild, savage denunciations of the Jews—of Captain Dreyfus in particular, who was lying (burnt up with fever, broken and battered in everything except determination) in his cell on the Devil's Island; whilst here, in Paris, the Cour de Cassation was deliberating whether there was sufficient "new" evidence to justify the prisoner being brought back to France and given a new trial. Rumours were flying about to the effect that the Court had already made up its mind to order the revision. Thus, fury of the Anti-Dreyfusards; frenzy of the Anti-Semites, and, in their newspapers, the statements that the Cour de Cassation had been "bought" by the Jews; that the Jews, being the masters of France, had "sold" the country to Germany; and that, therefore, the only thing to do with the Jews was to hang them on the lamp-posts of Paris. Particularly bloodthirsty and barbarous was M. Guérin's weekly journal, *L'Anti-Juif*, which stood on the floor, in three or four stacks, of this extraordinary study. In it were published the name and address of every Jewish tradesman in Paris.

Each column was headed with exhortation: "Français, N'achetez Rien Aux Juifs." Then, hideous cartoons depicting the flight of the Jews along the boulevards and their panic and agony—and their massacre.

"Now," said M. Guérin, "you have seen the official organ of the Anti-Semitic League, and I could show you pamphlets and posters that are equally powerful. No League in Paris is so resolute, so strong, so efficiently organised. Such is our success that I am shortly removing to more spacious quarters. There we shall deliver Anti-Semitic lectures, and give Anti-Semitic plays—open to all, not a centime will be charged. Then, boxing and fencing classes, pistol practice, a library, a doctor and a solicitor on the premises—always, no charge. The Parisians, being thrifty, will flock to us. They will cry: 'Here we get entertainment, medical and legal advice for nothing; it is admirable. Vive Guérin! Vive la France! À bas les Juifs!' The Government will be furious. Loubet in the Élysée will shake in his shoes. And Lépine will shout: 'We must arrest that *canaille* Guérin!' But let him come. I shall be armed more strongly than ever in my new quarters in the rue de Chabrol."

"A garden?" I ventured.

"There are no gardens in the rue de Chabrol: but there are cellars," grimly replied M. Guérin. "Come and see me there. You will be astonished. Au revoir."

Out in the passage, and on the staircase, I

encountered four or five of Jules Guérin's clerks and assistants; coarse, powerful young men, with bull-dog faces, who had been recruited by the chief of the Anti-Semites from the ghastly slaughter-house of Villette. In the garden I paused to inspect the stony flower-beds and the dilapidated well.

"The future cemetery of my enemies. Ah, the traitors, the brigands, the assassins! Let them come."

At an open window, in his sombrero and smoking his eternal cigarette, stood fierce Jules Guérin.

"Lépine in *that* flower-bed," he shouted, and then closed the window. But reopened it, when I reached the gateway, to cry:

"And Loubet, in the well."

A month later, Paris in uproar. On the afternoon of the 3rd June the Cour de Cassation ordered the revision of the Dreyfus Affair; the same night official arrangements were made for the return to France of the shattered prisoner of the Devil's Island; next day, during the race-meeting at Auteuil, President Loubet's hat was smashed over his head by the stick of a certain Baron Christiani, a Royalist Anti-Dreyfusard. Then, the fall of the Dupuy Ministry, and M. Loubet in a dilemma. M. Poincaré, astutest of statesmen, was summoned to the Élysée; but, with characteristic shrewdness, declined the task of forming a Cabinet in such unfavourable circumstances. M. Léon Bourgeois (absent on a Peace mission at The Hague) was telegraphed for, but could not be persuaded to exercise a pacific influ-

ence in his own country. M. Waldeck-Rousseau was next requisitioned; and left the Élysée with the assurance: "Monsieur le Président, I will do my best to succeed." Nothing could have been more admirable than his subsequent exertions, for, in making them, M. Waldeck-Rousseau, the most distinguished and most prosperous lawyer at the Paris Bar, had nothing to gain and everything to lose; and he must have been dismayed at the refusal, or the reluctance, of highly esteemed politicians to serve their country by fighting a just if an unpopular cause. Well, for a whole week the most painstaking, the most level-headed and truly patriotic Prime Minister who has yet worked for the Third Republic, visited prominent statesmen with the earnest desire to form a *ministère d'apaisement*, founded on the principles of disinterestedness and justice. Throughout that week, he was hooted in the streets, and ridiculed and insulted by MM. Rochefort, Millevoye, Drumont and Jules Guérin, who triumphantly predicted in their newspapers that "Panama Loubet"—like "Père Grévy" before him—would be compelled to resign for want of a ministry. And biting was the satire, and more savage became the contumely, when at last the Waldeck-Rousseau Ministry was completed, by the inclusion of such opposite, hostile personages as the "citizen Millerand" and fierce, aristocratic and despotic old General the Marquis de Galliffet. "After this," wrote Henri Rochefort, "the deluge." "At last," declared M. Drumont, "Paris will

rebel; and the next events will prove fatal to this unspeakable Republic." The next important event was the landing in France, in the middle of the night, of a bent, prematurely aged figure: Captain Dreyfus. How the musty old carriage in which he sat, dazed, exhausted, shivering, rattled over the cobble-stones to the Rennes prison! How the prison gates clanged to when the shabby vehicle had entered the dark, grim courtyard! And how split and how cracked was the voice of the prisoner from the Devil's Island when, at the court-martial a few days afterwards, he protested his innocence and refuted the new monstrous accusations of highly respected and brilliantly uniformed Generals Gonse, de Boisdeffre and Mercier! Solitary confinement had left him almost inarticulate. But he defended himself heroically: and, with an effort, straightened his bent back when questioned by his judges. Then how the trial dragged on; and what scenes took place in the streets, hotels and cafés of Rennes, which were crowded with *le Tout Paris* and echoed with Parisian exclamations and disputes! Brawls, duels, Henri Rochefort's white "Imperial" pulled; Maître Labori, Captain Dreyfus's brilliant counsel, shot between the shoulders; a famous *demi-mondaine* expelled the town; arrests, startling *canards*, alarms; hysteria, chaos, and delirium enough for Paris itself; and in Paris—whilst these exhibitions were occurring in the Rennes streets, and Captain Dreyfus (in the severe court-room) was stiffening his back and

straining his split voice until it rose to an uncanny scream—what of Jules Guérin in Paris ? and of his guns and revolvers, his well and his flower-bed ? and of his assistants and clerks, the young men with the bull-dog faces, whom he had recruited from the ghastly slaughter-house of La Villette ?

Well, first of all, came the dishevelled, dusty confusion of a *déménagement* in the rue Condorcet. The study walls were stripped of their revolvers; the basement was cleared of the printing-press that produced the murderous *Anti-Juif*; huge packing-cases were passed into a number of furniture vans; and so, farewell to the stony garden—in which not an "enemy" lay buried; and *en route* to No. 12 rue de Chabrol, a commodious, massive building with large windows and a solid oak door. The arrival of Jules Guérin and his assistants caused consternation amongst the peaceful, bourgeois inhabitants of the street. Lurid Anti-Semitic posters were stuck to the walls of No. 12; the din of the printing-machines disturbed the neighbours—and Guérin's voice of thunder (execrating the Jews and demanding the lives of his enemies) was to be heard through the open windows, while his enormous sombrero was another disquieting element in the orderly, dull thoroughfare. The Anti-Semitic lectures and plays were announced; a solicitor and a doctor were engaged—and Paris was invited to visit No. 12 rue de Chabrol and partake of its pleasures and advantages. Then came the suggestion in the *Anti-Juif* that Paris should fix a day and

an hour when the Jews should be hanged on the boulevard lamp-posts. And then followed the resolution of the Government—to have done with Jules Guérin! A warrant was issued for his arrest on the charge of "incitement to rebellion." Somehow or other the news reached No. 12; and when the Commissary of Police (armed with his warrant) rang at the oak door, the massive form of Guérin appeared at a window. "Bandit," he shouted. "There are twenty of us in here: and not one of us will be taken alive. Tell the Government of Traitors we shall fight to the death." And he flourished a revolver, and his assistants, assembled behind him in the window, cheered wildly. Away went the Commissary of Police for further orders. Up came MM. Drumont, Millevoye and other leading Anti-Semites with exhortations to surrender. But Guérin, from his window, reiterated his determination to die heroically at his post: and again the young men with the bull-dog faces cheered enthusiastically. And there were cries of "Mon Dieu, quelle affaire!" and angry protests, lamentations and tears amongst the shopkeepers and peaceful old *rentiers* of the street. Many of them put up their shutters and fled, when policemen and Municipal Guards marched up and stationed themselves outside No. 12. Jules Guérin greeted them with cries of "Assassins!"; shook his great fist threateningly; rushed from window to window, shouting forth abuse. More cheering from his assistants, who pointed guns at the authorities.

"It is a revolution," cried the householders. "Let us save ourselves quickly."

Shutters were hurried up everywhere; cabs carried off distracted *rentiers* and their smaller belongings; policemen and Municipal Guards barred either end of the rue de Chabrol, and permitted only people who had business in the street to pass them; and with the cutting off of water and gas supplies, the siege of Fort Chabrol began in earnest.

The Holder of the Fort—though the Parisian, interested in "affaires," studied him attentively—could only be observed from a distance. The curious, with the aid of opera-glasses, discovered him sitting at an open window with rifles resting on either side of him; or beheld him walking about the roof amidst the chimney-pots—an extraordinary figure in his sombrero. Now and again he discharged revolvers at the heavens: a proceeding that never failed to arouse the enthusiasm of his fellow-prisoners. Then leaning perilously over the parapet or out of a window, Guérin would apostrophise the soldiers and policemen below as "brigands" and "assassins"; and throw down pencilled messages (addressed to the "Ministry of Traitors" and the "Government of Forgers") inviting all State officials to come to the rue de Chabrol and be shot through their "infamous heads" or their "abominable hearts." When particularly indignant, Guérin would hurl forth a cup, a bottle, a saucepan—but the missiles invariably fell wide of the mark; and the Guards

and police (whilst smoking cigarettes) snapped their fingers and laughed back mockingly and sardonically at the rebel. It was weary work for the besiegers; the air was stale and sickly with disinfectants; and often it rained.

Guérin blessed the downpours. He was short of water. When the skies were generous, he brought up buckets and basins and a great bath on to the roof—and shook his fist exultingly at the watchers beneath as the rain pattered into and filled those receptacles; and next, coming to the edge of the parapet with a glass in hand, drank to the death of the "Government of Assassins." Indeed, quite an orgy of water-drinking on the roof of the Fort; for the ex-butchers, with the bull-dog faces, uproariously proposed the health of their chief, and then emptied their glasses into the street to show that they had no fear of suffering from thirst.

But what of provisions? The twenty-fifth night of the siege—a dark, wet night—the police fancied they discerned mysterious objects flying far over their heads on to the roof of Fort Chabrol. Much speculation, infinite straining of eyes and stretching of ears, and suddenly a paper parcel, falling from above, struck a Municipal Guard. Shock of the Guard. The cry: "It is a bomb!" But it was only a ham—a fine, excellent ham. And a few minutes later the Guards and police were searching the house from which it had been thrown and examining numbers of other paper parcels (carefully tied up) that

contained joints of meat, "groceries," sugared cakes, fruit and fresh salads; all of which luxuries were obviously intended for the rebels over the way. But where were Guérin's friends and accomplices? Not a soul in the house; so said a policeman: "Try the roof." And there, on the roof, more paper parcels ready to be thrown across to the Fort; and hiding behind the chimney-pots, four or five men.

"Arrest them," cried an officer. And then, amidst the chimney-pots, much dodging and slipping and catching as in the games of "hide-and-seek" and "touch wood"; whilst over the way on *his* roof, Jules Guérin raced about amidst *his* chimney-pots, swinging a lantern and furiously shouting: "Assassins. Assassins." Thus, no sleep for the few remaining householders that night. When his friends had been removed from the roof, and the police reappeared in the street with their captives and laden with parcels, Jules Guérin and his assistants discharged revolvers at the heavy, dark clouds; and, next morning, hurled fenders, fire-irons and a bedstead into the street. No one was struck: the prisoners were too excited to take aim.

Guérin's harangues were still bloodthirsty, but it was noticed that he looked pale and drawn when he appeared at the windows, as though suffering from want of nourishment and exercise. . . . Now he was more subdued as he took air amidst the chimney-pots; and he would sit up on the roof in the moonlight, with a gun across his knees, for a

whole hour without moving. How the air reeked with disinfectants, and how sombre was the Fort! Apparently oil and candles were scarce, for only a single candle was used at a time. One saw its dim light passing from room to room—now on the first floor, then on the second, the third; then there was darkness. Upon two occasions Guérin spent the entire night on the roof. A dishevelled shivering object he was at daybreak, with his coat-collar turned up and the sombrero dragged down over his ears. Nor did his young assistants with the bull-dog faces fare better. Their cheers became faint: and they themselves were to be discerned leaning moodily against the chimney-pots or yawning with all their mouths behind the windows. Moreover, it was suspected by the police that there was illness in the Fort. One night a candle burned steadily in the same room. Not a soul on the roof, silence in the citadel. At daybreak Jules Guérin hoisted a black flag; one of the young prisoners with the bull-dog face was dying. In answer to Jules Guérin's call, an officer stepped forward, and parleying ensued. An ambulance was brought up. When the solid oak door of Fort Chabrol opened and Jules Guérin appeared with the dying man in his arms, the policemen and Guards stood gravely at salute. Away, slowly, went the ambulance. And no sooner had it vanished than Jules Guérin—livid and trembling—banged to and bolted the door: rushed back to his window, and there, pointing dramatically to the black flag, hoarsely shouted: "Assassins. Assassins. Assassins."

On the 9th September, at five o'clock in the afternoon, Paris heard from Rennes that Captain Dreyfus had—O astounding judgment!—been found guilty of high treason, "with extenuating circumstances." On the following Tuesday it was announced—O amazing clemency—that the "traitor" had been pardoned. And throughout France there arose a cry of "N'en Parlons Plus."

Up and down the boulevards on that Tuesday rushed scores of hoarse, unshaven *camelots* with their latest song. "N'en Parlons Plus," they shouted. Then (in some cases) the chorus was chanted :

> "Le cauchemar est fini ; car la France est vengée,
> Qu'importe que l'on a gracié Dreyfus ?
> La nation entière, heureuse et soulagée,
> N'a plus qu'un désir—c'est qu'on n'en parle plus."

But there remained Fort Chabrol. Neither "sanity" nor "order" could prevail in Paris whilst Jules Guérin was defying the Government from his window, and hurling missiles at its public servants, and discharging revolvers at the heavens. As the *camelots* were selling their song on the boulevards, as Paris was rejoicing in cafés that the "Affaire" was now "buried," Jules Guérin still walked his roof, and his assistants leant dejectedly against the chimney-pots : and M. Lépine, Chief of the Police, was on his side preparing an attack on the stronghold. A few journalists were let into the secret. At ten o'clock on the night of Tuesday, the 12th September—the thirty-seventh and last night of the siege—MM. les

journalistes were permitted to penetrate through the lines of policemen and of Municipal and Republican Guards that guarded the dark, gloomy rue de Chabrol. Not a light in the citadel. But shadowy forms were to be distinguished on the roof. And at a window, smoking a cigarette, stood Jules Guérin, in his sombrero.

"*Mon vieux* Jules, it is for to-night. Be reasonable and come out," shouted a journalist; and he was promptly pulled backwards and called to order by a policeman. But M. Millevoye, the Anti-Semite deputy and editor of *La Patrie*, was permitted to converse with the rebel on the condition that he urged him to surrender.

"He swears he will fight to the death," stated M. Millevoye to an officer. Very pale and agitated was the deputy. Very excited were the journalists, who had provided themselves with sandwiches, flasks and strong oil of eucalyptus with which to ward off contamination. Calm was the Chief of the Police, when he appeared on the scene with various officials and announced that the *pompiers* and their engines were on the way.

It was a cold, disagreeable night. The clatter of horses' hoofs—up came a detachment of the mounted Republican Guard. The hissing of fire-engines; here were the *pompiers*. A distant babel of voices, for now, at one o'clock in the morning, all kinds and conditions of Parisians had heard of the impending attack on the citadel, and had hastened to the barriers—only to find themselves refused admittance to the grim,

besieged thoroughfare. From my side of the barrier I beheld—beyond it—stalwart market-people from the Halles, Apaches in caps and scarlet waistbands, ragged old loafers, revellers from Maxim's and the stifling, frenzied night-restaurants of Montmartre.

"Impossible to pass," declared the policeman. An officer of the Municipal Guards facetiously kept up the refrain: "Not President Loubet; not his Holiness the Pope; not even the *bon Dieu*, could I possibly allow to pass." Songs from the Apaches. Naïve exclamations from the simple market-women.

"Please give this bouquet to Guérin. He is a real man; he is *épatant*—do please send him these flowers," cried a brilliant *demi-mondaine* from Maxim's, holding forth a bouquet of weird orchids. "Alas, madame," replied the facetious officer; "alas, not even a bouquet from paradise could I possibly allow to pass."

Ominous sounds in the rue de Chabrol. The thud and the clanking of the firemen's hose as it was dragged towards No. 12; the increased hissing of the steam-engines; the impatient clatter of the horses' hoofs; the bolting and barring of doors, and the putting up of shutters in those few houses where residents remained. Ominous, too, the consultations (carried on in a low voice) between M. Lépine and the various officials. Then the flash of lanterns, the smoke pouring forth from the funnels of the steam-engines, the stench of the disinfectants, those shadowy figures still on

the roof of Fort Chabrol; and Jules Guérin still at his window in his sombrero, still smoking cigarettes unconcernedly, still calmly watching the preparations for the attack.

"It is sinister," cried a journalist.

"So all is ready," rang out the voice of the Chief of the Police. Briskly stepping forward, M. Lépine thus addressed Jules Guérin: "It is a quarter to four o'clock. If, at four o'clock, you do not surrender, we shall use force."

Jules Guérin smoked on.

Still nearer to the Fort came the *pompiers*, dragging their hose. The plan was that they should deluge the massive building with water, while their colleagues with the shining hatchets should break down the door. A last consultation between M. Lépine and the officials. He held his watch in his hand. Five minutes to four o'clock. The neighing of a restive horse. Shouts and song from behind the barrier. Again, the clanking of the hose. Three . . . two . . . minutes to four. Jules Guérin, striking a match, lighted a new cigarette.

"He means to fight. It will be appalling," exclaimed a journalist.

"Jules Guérin, it is four o'clock," cried M. Lépine, again stepping forward. Without a word, the man in the sombrero banged down the window, and a few moments later the shadowy figures of his assistants disappeared from the roof.

"I thought so, but I wasn't sure—no, I wasn't sure," said M. Lépine—when the heavy oak door swung open!

A third time he stepped forward—entered the doorway—vanished—reappeared to give an order—again vanished. Up with the hose, into the gutter with the fire-engines; way for half-a-dozen ordinary, shabby *fiacres* which came bumping and lurching down the street, pulled up before the oak door: and a few minutes later took Jules Guérin and the young men with the bull-dog faces ingloriously away to the Santé prison!

"N'en Parlons Plus," said Paris, when the Senate, assembled as a High Court, sentenced Jules Guérin, Paul Déroulède, and other rebels and conspirators against the safety of the Republic to long terms of imprisonment and exile.

"N'en Parlons Plus," reiterated Paris, when the Amnesty Bill permitted the exiles to return to their country.

Little more was heard of Jules Guérin. France, having been restored to order and sanity, and having made what reparation she could to Major Dreyfus, would have no more of Anti-Semitism; and on his return from exile, the rebel of Fort Chabrol retired into the obscurity of a damp, ugly little house in the valley of the Seine.

He still wore his sombrero; but his spirit was broken, and he pottered about in his garden and smoked cigarettes by the side of an evil-smelling stove. Then, a year ago, came the devastating floods. After saving his own scanty furniture, Jules Guérin went to the assistance of his neighbours. He was himself again, dashing hither and thither, issuing orders, directing operations.

Many valiant feats he performed. He was rough, but he was kind. It was through standing waist-deep in the cold, murky water—whilst helping his neighbours—that he contracted pneumonia.

"The death, at the age of forty-nine, is announced of M. Jules Guérin: who had his hour of notoriety."

So—and no more—said the *Figaro*.

XIII

DEATH OF HENRI ROCHEFORT[1]

IT is with mixed emotions that I record my own personal recollections of the late Henri Rochefort. They go back fourteen years, to the lurid, delirious summer of 1899, when Jules Guérin, the leader of the Anti-Semites, evaded arrest by shutting himself up in Fort Chabrol; when Dreyfus, bent, shattered, almost voiceless, was enduring the anguish of a second court-martial; when the boulevards were being swept of tumultuous manifestants every night by the Republican Guard.

Rochefort was living in a little villa at the entrance to the Bois de Boulogne: a retreat for a sage, a poet, a dreamer; the very last abode, one would have thought, for the most thunderous figure in French public life. By rights, Rochefort the Ferocious should have been living in a vast boulevard apartment overlooking the nightly Anti-Dreyfusard uproar. But there he was (when first I met him) in that innocent maisonnette—in dressing-gown and slippers, amidst flowers, pictures and frail china—actually playing with a fluffy toy lamb, of the kind hawked about for two francs on the terraces of the Paris cafés. It was

[1] He died on 27th June 1913.

only his snowy white hair, brushed upwards, that made him picturesque. Pale, steely blue eyes, that lit up cruelly, evilly at times; a face seamed, sallow and horse-like in shape; a harsh, guttural voice; large, yellowish hands, with long, pointed finger-nails.

Upon the occasion of my first visit to the innocent maisonnette, there was no cause for agitation. The toy lamb was the attraction. A tube was attached to it, and at the end of the tube was a bulb which, when pressed, made the lamb leap. Again and again, Rochefort the Lurid set the lamb leaping. I too lost my heart to the lamb, and also made it frisk. Amidst all this irresponsibility, my host was pleased to pronounce me "sympathetic" and "charming," not like the "traditional" Englishman with the bull-dog, the aggressive side-whiskers and long, glistening teeth. Rochefort saw me to the garden door; Rochefort actually plucked me a rose; Rochefort's parting words were a cordial invitation to visit him and his lamb again soon. So was I amazed to find myself described in his very next article as "a sinister brigand, in the pay of the Jews; in fact, one of those diabolical bandits who are devastating our beloved France."

. . . A week later I approached him, and mildly protested, as he was sitting on the terrace of the Café de la Paix, drinking milk and Vichy water, sucking his eternal lozenges—and still playing with the lamb.

"Bah, that was only print," came the reply.

"Let us resume our game with the lamb." As he made it leap about deftly amongst the glasses on the marble-topped table, passers-by, recognising his Luridness, stopped, stared and smiled at the spectacle. "That's the great Rochefort," said the *maître d'hôtel* to an American tourist: and stupefaction of the States. Rising at last, and stuffing the lamb into his pocket, Rochefort remarked: "I must go off and do my article, but you sha'n't be the brigand. I feel amiable to-night."

Next morning appeared the notorious, atrocious article demanding that walnut shells—containing long, hairy spiders—should be strapped to the eyes of Captain Dreyfus.

What was the reason of Rochefort's abominable campaign against the martyr from the Devil's Island? Since he styled himself a democrat, the champion of liberty and justice, the enemy of tyranny, one would have expected to see the fierce old journalist fighting vigorously for Dreyfus. The fact is, Rochefort was a mass of contradictions: an imp of perversity: at once brutal and humane; gentle and bloodthirsty; simple and vain; the most chaotic Frenchman that ever died. Search his autobiography, in three portly volumes: not once do you find him resting, smiling or reflecting—he is all thunder and lightning, an everlasting storm. Exile, duels, fines and imprisonment—wild, delirious attacks upon the Government of the day. No one escaped; for fifty years, in the columns of the

Figaro, the *Lanterne*, the *Intransigeant*, and finally, in the *Patrie*, Rochefort pursued presidents and politicians with his unique, extravagant vocabulary. M. Jaurès, the Socialist leader, was "a decayed turnip"; M. Georges Clemenceau, "a loathsome leper"; M. Briand, "a moulting vulture." As for M. Combes, to the guillotine with him, and into the Seine with M. Delcassé, and a rope and a boulevard lamp-post for M. Pelletan. Then President Loubet was "the foulest of assassins"; President Fallières, "the fat old satyr of the Élysée"; and Madame Marguerite Steinheil, "the Black Panther."

For the life of me I could trace nothing of the "panther" in Madame Steinheil during the ten terrible days that she sat in the dock of the dim, oak-panelled Paris Assize Court. As for her "blackness," Rochefort was referring to her clothes.

"Heavy crape bands round the accused woman's black dress, stiff crape bows in the widow's cap, a deep sombre border to the handkerchief which she clenched tightly, convulsively, in her black-gloved hand . . . under her eyes, dark, dark shadows, which turned green as the trial tragically wore on."[1] Impossible, one might have thought, not to sympathise with this prisoner who, with all her follies and faults, was certainly not the murderess of her husband and mother.

But what cared Rochefort for evidence and arguments? Leaning forward in his seat in the

[1] See page 196.

Press-box, his sallow face distorted with fury, he fixed the "Tragic Widow" with his steely, cruel eyes. ("I think he was trying to hypnotise me—certainly to terrify me," relates Madame Steinheil in her *Memoirs.*) Again and again he cracked his lozenges, gesticulated angrily with his large yellow hands. During the adjournments, he held forth violently in the corridors of the Law Courts. Not only was Madame Steinheil the murderess of her mother and husband, but she was also the assassin of President Félix Faure. She poisoned him in the Élysée, at the instigation of the Jews, who knew that so long as Faure remained President there would be no revision of the Dreyfus affair. So, a triple murderess—and "crack, crack" went the lozenges. Later, when it became certain that Madame Steinheil would be acquitted, Rochefort declared that judge and jury had been "bought," and that the Government had all along protected the "Black Panther." His hands were trembling, the sallow face had turned livid, when at one o'clock in the morning the jury filed into the dim, stifling court and delivered their verdict: "Not Guilty" on all counts. How Rochefort scowled at the cries of "Vive Madame Steinheil!" and "Vive la Justice!" How he sneered when the barristers cheered, applauded and flung their black *képis* into the air! With what disgust he listened to the bravoes from the journalists and the public at the back of the court. When Madame Steinheil fainted, and was being carried out of the dock by the Municipal Guards,

Rochefort's ruthless hatred made the compassion of the public loathsome to him. Shaking, speechless with rage, he roughly pushed his way out of court, cracking his lozenges with such savagery that he must have very nearly broken his teeth.

But there were two Henri Rocheforts, and the virtues of the second almost made amends for the vices of the first.

The second Rochefort revealed himself at the age of twenty. He was a medical student. Shortly after the adoption of these studies young Rochefort harangued the surgeon and his fellow-students upon the "iniquities" of vivisection: and *that* ended his short medical career. Another outburst at the Hôtel de Ville, when Rochefort next accepted a petty clerkship at a pound a week. His colleagues were underpaid and overworked; a scarcity of light and utter lack of ventilation in the dusty, shabby office-rooms resulted in cases of acute anæmia and consumption. "We must have light—floods of it. We must have air—great, healthy draughts of it," shouted youthful Rochefort to a high official. "I'm strong enough myself and don't care; but look at your clerks. Martyrs, victims! *De l'air, de la lumière, nom de Dieu!*"

The high official, a pompous, apoplectic soul, was struck dumb by Rochefort's invasion of his private sanctum. At last he gasped: "If you were not the son of a marquis——" But Rochefort interrupted: "My father died a fort-

night ago. But I have no predilection for titles. My name is Henri Rochefort."

Rochefort nevertheless was an aristocrat—"*la race*" remained, in spite of his assumption of democracy. He was, in fine, a democrat-aristocrat—most chaotic of combinations. Therein lay the secret of his turbulence and incoherency. Like all French aristocrats, he was a militarist at heart. He was the ally of Boulanger. He was the hottest champion of Paul Déroulède when that well-meaning but impossible "patriot" attempted his celebrated *coup d'état*, on the morning of President Félix Faure's funeral, by establishing General Roget as a military dictator in the Élysée. He was, furthermore, an Anti-Semite. "Pale, white blood," he cried disdainfully of the French *noblesse*. His own blood was vigorously red, but tinged indelibly with blue. Yes; "*la race*" remained, persisted—clashed inevitably with the true spirit of democracy. And hence the chaos, the thunder and lightning; from out of which there nevertheless shone tenderness, chivalry and a love of beautiful things. He loved music, sculpture, pictures: and whilst urging on France to declare war against England over the Fashoda Affair, announced in my hearing that he would rather annex a portrait by Reynolds than a province in the Sudan. He loved animals: and animals loved him. Wild fury of Rochefort when a bull-fight was advertised to take place at Enghien-les-Bains.

When the Government declined to forbid it, down to Enghien went Rochefort and a number of friends. Sallow-faced old Rochefort seized hold of the "impresario" who was organising the bull-fight and shook him. "I and my friends are going to wreck your arena," he shouted. Nor did he release the "impresario" until the latter had promised that the bull-fight should not take place.

If Rochefort had been all vindictiveness and luridness, how did it come to pass that he was the guest of the great-hearted Victor Hugo, when both of them were exiles in Brussels? And if the hoarse-voiced, steely-eyed old journalist had been all venom, how did it come about that he was the devoted, admiring friend of that very noble, if disconcerting apostle of humanity, Louise Michel, "the Red Virgin."

Londoners may remember the frail, thin, shabby little Woman who denounced social injustices in a dingy hall in a back street off Tottenham Court Road some ten years ago. In appearance she was nothing—until she spoke. And when Louise Michel spoke, ah dear me, how one realised the miseries grimly and heroically endured by the poor of this topsy-turvy world! The shabby, frail little figure, with the big, inspired eyes, became galvanised. From London to Paris, from Paris to every European capital, travelled the "Red Virgin"—incomparably eloquent—the woes and sufferings of her fellow-creatures at once crushing and supporting her.

Herself, she cared nothing for. The same old threadbare black dress; eternal dim attics and meagre food; the same old self-sacrifice, the pity to the verge of despair, the same old breakdowns from weakness and exhaustion.

Rochefort—Victor Henri Marquis de Rochefort-Luçay—sought her out in her attic. When the "Red Virgin" was travelling and lecturing abroad, Rochefort instructed his foreign correspondents to look after her. He bought her a country house: which she promptly sold; he gave her an annuity: which she mortgaged; he arranged that his tradespeople should serve her in his name; but house, annuity, provisions—everything went to the poor.

"I can do nothing with her," Rochefort once told me. "She is at once sublime and adorable and ridiculous! When I tell her she is killing herself, she replies: 'Tant pis, mon petit Henri. But you yourself will die one of these days.'"

A week later Louise Michel expired suddenly, from exhaustion, at Marseilles.[1] Sallow-faced, white-headed, red-eyed old Rochefort was the chief mourner at the funeral. As he walked, bent, trembling, behind the hearse of the "Red Virgin"—crack, crack went the lozenges.

The month of June, 1912. Rochefort's daily article in the *Patrie* missing; and again missing the next day, and the day after that—the first time octogenarian Rochefort had

[1] 19th January 1905.

"missed" his daily lurid article for fifty-two years!

On the fourth day there appears in the *Patrie* the following intimation:—"I shall soon reach my eighty-second year, and it is now half-a-century since I have worked without a rest even in prison or in exile, at the hard trade of a journalist, which is the first and the most noble of all professions—when it is not the lowest. I think I have earned the right to a rest. But it will only be a short one. My old teeth can still bite."

However, the "rest" in the country is prolonged: and the teeth don't "bite" again. Eyesight becomes misty. Hearing next fails. Behold Rochefort in a dressing-gown, stretched on an invalid's chair in a drowsy country garden, whence he is transported, as a last hope, to Aix-les-Bains,—where he dies.

The 30th June 1913. Day of Rochefort's funeral. All Paris lining the boulevards and streets as the cortège, half-a-mile long, passes by. A crowd of all kinds and conditions of Parisians. Here is M. Jaurès, "the decayed turnip." There is M. Clemenceau, "the loathsome leper." Over there, M. Briand, "the moulting vulture." And their heads are uncovered; there is not the faintest resentment in their minds as the remains of lurid, yet not always unkind, old Rochefort are borne away round the corner under a magnificent purple pall.

Round the corner and up the steep hill to the

vast, rambling Montmartre Cemetery. Tombs, shadows, silence, mystery within the cemetery walls; but, beyond them, the hectic arms of the Moulin Rouge, and the lurid lights of night restaurants. In this mixed atmosphere Henri Rochefort has an appropriate resting-place.

XIV

ROYAL VISITS TO PARIS

WHENEVER France is shaken by a scandal, convulsed by a crisis, the voice of the undiscerning prophet is to be heard proclaiming the doom of the Republic. The Affair of the Decorations in President Grévy's time, the Panama Affair, the Dreyfus Affair, the Steinheil Affair, yesterday's Rochette-Caillaux-Calmette Affair; each of these delirious dramas excited the assertion that the French people, disgusted and indignant at so much political corruption, were ready and eager for the restoration of the old régime. True, these five scandals—and many other smaller ones—shocked, saddened, humiliated the French nation. But at no time have they caused the average Frenchman—most intelligent and reasonable of beings—to lose faith in the Republic. Invariably he has maintained that it is not the Republic that is at fault, but the Republicans behind her; emphatically, he has insisted that the remedy lies, not in the overthrow, but in the *reform*, of the Republic—in the honest enforcement of the principles and doctrines of the Rights of Man. No Kings, no Emperors for Twentieth-Century France! Imagine, if you can do it, Philippe, Duke of

Orleans, the handsomest, the most brilliant, the most irresistible of Pretenders. Suppose Prince Victor Napoleon endowed with some of the military and administrative genius of the Petit Caporal, instead of having married and settled down in comfortable, bourgeois little Belgium. Picture a modern General Boulanger on a new black charger—France would, nevertheless, remain true to the Republican régime. "Ah non, mon vieux, pas de ça," one can hear the average Frenchman say to the would-be monarch. "We have had you before. We know better than to try you again. Bonsoir."

Still, in spite of their confirmed Republicanism, the French people love Royalty—the Royalty of other nations. How often, outside national buildings that bear the democratic motto of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, have I heard shouts of: "Vive le Roi" and "Vive la Reine," and admiring exclamations of: "Il est beau" and "Elle est gentille," when a foreign monarch and his consort have visited Paris! How brilliantly has the city been adorned and illuminated; what a special shine on the helmets and breastplates of the Republican Guard, and on the boots of the little, nervous boulevard policemen; what a constant playing of the august visitor's own national anthem! In all countries a neighbouring sovereign is received cordially, elaborately. But it is in Republican France that a Royal visit is marked with the greatest pomp, circumstance and excitement. For the fact is that France,

more than any other country, loves a fête—and the arrival in Paris of a King means flags, fairy lamps, festoons of paper flowers, fireworks. (The mere ascent of a rocket, the smallest shower of "golden rain" will throw the Parisian into ecstasies.) Also it delights the Frenchman to behold the uniforms, and the Stars and Orders of foreign nations—and he will stand about for hours to catch only a glimpse of the monarch.

"Je l'ai vu, moi," M. le Bourgeois declares proudly. Probably he has discerned no more than the nose, or the ear or the eyebrow of his Majesty. But he "salutes" the ear and the nose, he cheers the eyebrow: and the newspapers are full of the "distinction" and "graciousness" and "wit" of the visiting sovereign. Modern French novels and plays also call attention to the homage paid by Parisians to foreign Royalty. In that brilliant comedy, *Le Roi*, the mythical King of Cerdagne thus addresses a Parisienne: "Le séjour à Paris, c'est une chose qui nous délecte, nous autres pauvres rois, pauvres rois de province! On est si riant pour nous, ici! Pour aimer les rois, il n'y a vraiment plus que la France." And the lady replies: "Mais elle est sincère, sire. Elle est amoureuse de vous. Elle flirte, elle fait la coquette—elle aime ça. La France est une Parisienne." Most indisputably, France "flirts" with Foreign Royalty. Vast quantities of flowers, fresh and artificial, here, there and everywhere. All official buildings blazing and glittering with huge electrical devices.

About ten o'clock at night—amidst what murmurs, exclamations, rapture!—fireworks on the ghost-haunted Ile de France. Then Republican and Municipal Guards massed on the Place de l'Opéra; and a dense crowd assembled to witness the arrival of his Majesty, M. le Président, MM. les Ambassadeurs, and hosts of distinguished personages, for the gala performance. All Paris turns out: stout M. le Bourgeois, students from the Latin Quarter, *midinettes* in their best hats (I prefer them at noon, when Mesdemoiselles Marie and Yvonne are bareheaded), workmen in their Sunday suits, small clerks in pink shirts, obscure, dim-eyed old Government officials, Apaches on their good behaviour, cabmen and chauffeurs (off their boxes), conscripts with permits, concierges hastened from their lodges in slippers, street gamins—Victor Hugo's Gavroche—with his inimitable sarcasms and repartee—all turn out to behold the Royal guest of Republican France pay his State visit to the Opera. But what with the police and the troops and the closed carriage of the sovereign, all these kinds and conditions of Parisians do not behold even so much as the eyebrow of his Majesty. They remain there until the performance is over, but with no happier success. Away goes the Royal carriage, without affording the crowd the view of an ear-tip, a chin or the nape of the neck. Still, in spite of the crowd having seen nothing, what cheers! I have heard them raised for the Tsar; for the Kings of Greece, Belgium, Sweden, Nor-

way and Italy; for the late ruler of Portugal; for the highly popular Alfonso of Spain; for the greatest favourite of all, the idol of the Parisians—King Edward the Seventh. King Edward's State visit took place eleven years ago. The result of it, twelve months later, was the consummation of the *Entente*. Thus the present month of April will see Paris celebrating a "double" event: the visit of King George and Queen Mary, and the tenth anniversary of the Cordial Understanding. And it is safe to affirm that when the cheers break out afresh in honour of their Majesties, they will not fail to surpass in spontaneity and enthusiasm all the cheers of the past.

Royal visits to Paris never vary. They last four or five days, and during that brief period the foreign sovereign, the French President, the Cabinet Ministers, the array of high State officials, the troops, the police, the Press and the greater part of Paris public have so much to do and to see that at the end of the whirl they cannot but confess to a condition of exhaustion. Both the Royal visitor and the President hold brilliant State banquets. Most probably there is a third banquet at the Quai d'Orsay. The gala at the Opera (or sometimes at the Français), a Military Review, an expedition to Versailles, a reception at the Hôtel de Ville, a special race-meeting, presentations of Addresses: such are the traditional items in the strenuous "programme." Then, speeches to make; and since they are eminently "official," they must be carefully considered, and

thoroughly mastered, beforehand. As, on the other score, the "official" toasts and speeches are invariably stereotyped in substance and sentiment, they cannot demand much inventiveness or exertion. They must be mutually polite and complimentary—a repetition of one another.

However, in spite of the polite and amusing banality of the "official" speeches, Royal visits to France can have far-reaching consequences. Eighteen years ago the arrival in Paris of the Tsar resulted in the Franco-Russian Alliance. After that, King Edward and the *Entente*; and since then the visits of the kings of Spain and Italy have undoubtedly promoted a mutual friendly feeling between those two countries and Republican France. Then there have also taken place, during the last five or six years, odd, amazing Royal visits: that have caused the punctilious French Protocol no end of *ennuis* and perplexities. Behold black-faced and burly old Sisowath, King of Cambodia, descending most indecorously upon Paris, in a battered top-hat and gorgeous silken robes: and with a party of bejewelled native dancing-girls! Impossible to separate Sisowath from his monstrous top-hat (which came from heaven knows where) and his dancers; impossible, therefore, to entertain his Cambodian Majesty ceremoniously. Nor would he have tolerated State banquets, the Hôtel de Ville, Versailles, the Opera. No pomp for black Sisowath. A great deal of his time he spent in going up and

down lifts; and in listening to gay songs from the gramophone. When he drove through the streets he kissed his great ebony hands at the Parisiennes. He was, as a matter of fact, for kissing everybody: even capacious President Fallières, even sallow, petulant M. Clemenceau. As he did his embracing, he hugged his victims in his huge, massive arms. Still, he was a King—and so official France had to overlook his eccentricities. As for the Parisians, they revelled in Bohemian Sisowath. Ecstatic, gay cries of "*Vive le roi!*" and "*Vivent les petites danseuses*":—to which his merry old Majesty responded by standing up in his carriage, and waving the disgraceful top-hat; and blowing forth more and more kisses; and shouting out messages in his own incomprehensible language. . . . Then, after Sisowath, Mulai Hafid, the ex-Sultan of Morocco, who before coming to Paris passed a few days at Vichy. Nobody, however, had reason to cheer or rejoice over this Royal visitor: for his behaviour was intolerable. Sisowath was expansive, affectionate, *rigolo*; Mulai Hafid was violent, insolent, offensive.

"Grotesque, horrible machines" was "Mulai's" comment on the hats of the fashionable Frenchwomen. The military bands, "they drive me mad." The actresses, "shameless and shocking"—they should be veiled like the ladies of Morocco. "Where is your sun?" demanded the ex-Sultan, looking up at the grey skies. "I am so bored that I am going to bed. What a people, what a country!" All this, and more,

the Yellow journalists gleefully repeated in their newspapers. Then, photographs of "Mulai" scowling, of "Mulai" disdainful, of "Mulai" contemptuous. So that when "Mulai" came to Paris, still scowling, the Hippolyte Durands were indignant at his bad manners. In France, you mustn't speak ill of anything French: especially when you are in receipt of a pension of 350,000 francs a year.

But "Mulai" didn't care. He was for ever taking the Paris journalists into his confidence, and more and more unflattering became his comments on French life. As it rained every day, his temper was detestable; and he has been seen to shake his fist at the French skies. Then he omitted to salute the French flag: he described the French language as ridiculous; he yawned in the Louvre: and he retired to bed through sheer boredom a dozen times a day.

Also, "Mulai" was said to be furious because the Press had compared him unfavourably with Sisowath, the amazing ebony-black monarch of Cambodia. "Sisowath," said the papers, was not only *rigolo*. When he came to Paris seven years ago he wore brilliant robes, a multitude of diamonds—as well as a battered old top-hat. And he laughed and laughed all day long. Not only did he kiss his great black hands at the Parisiennes, but he showered silver amongst the crowd. And he meant it kindly when he hugged bald, portly State officials. In a word, black, enormous Sisowath of Cambodia was an

unsophisticated, affectionate, merry old soul. But, in " Mulai's " estimation, Sisowath is a savage, and furious, as I have said, is the ex-Sultan that he should be mentioned in the same breath with him.

Socially, in fact, " Mulai's " visit to France is anything but a success. He has been raging against French boots, because, after putting on a pair, they pinched him. He has been cursing French automobiles, because they travel so fast. And he has hurled a French suit of clothes (especially made for him) out of the window, because of the buttons.

" Ah non, c'est trop fort," cries Hippolyte Durand, as he reads of " Mulai's " outbursts in the papers. And still greater becomes his indignation, when he comes upon the following statement :—" The situation in Morocco continues serious. The Vled Bu Beker, of the Rehama tribe, is active. The attitude of the Vled Belghina and the Vled Amrane Fukania is threatening. The Hiania tribesmen are gathered at Safrata on the Wed Sebu. At Ben Guerie, Bab Aissa, Suk-el-Arba and——"

" I will read no more ; I understand nothing, I am distracted ! " cries M. Hippolyte Durand. " Ah, *nom d'un nom*, what a sinister country is this Morocco ! "

Earlier in this paper, I observed that Royal visits to Paris never " vary," but in one respect this statement requires correction. The most delicate, the most anxious duty of the French Government is to watch over the safety of her

illustrious guests. Paris, rightly or wrongly, is alleged to abound with anarchists, fanatics and lunatics. Ask M. Guichard, one of the chiefs of the Criminal Investigation Department: and he will tell you that a Royal visit, if a delight to the public, is a misery and a nightmare to the detective police. The extent, the depth of the misery depends upon the nationality of the monarch. Of course, no fears as to old Sisowath's safety; and peril for Mulai Hafid, who was nearly always in bed, caused even slighter apprehensions. The kings of Belgium, Sweden and Norway—well, the detective police, although watchful, "breathed" freely and slept of nights when their Majesties came to Paris. But the King of Italy, a hundred thousand precautions; the King of Spain—extraordinary vigilance: and even then a bomb fell within a few yards of the Royal carriage; the Tsar—a state of panic and siege that still haunts me after the interval of eighteen long years. Weeks before his Imperial Majesty's arrival, Russian detectives descended upon Paris. Together with their French colleagues they searched for conspirators and bombs—even forcing their way into the rooms of the poor Russian girl students of the Latin Quarter, seizing their correspondence, subjecting them to offensive cross-examinations. Still rougher methods with the male students: with Russian plumbers, clerks and mechanics; many were arrested on no evidence as "revolutionaries" and imprisoned (without being allowed to communicate with their friends)

until after the Imperial Visitor's departure. Often, as a result of the raids of the detective police, the poorer Russian residents in Paris were given *congé* by terrified concierges, and had to take refuge in stifling, common lodging-houses, or seek for shelter on the outskirts of Paris. Meanwhile, Paris was decking herself out with flowers and flags, rehearsing coloured electrical "effects," setting the supports for the panoramic fireworks, buying up the photographs of the Tsar of All the Russias. But it was a pale, uneasy, harassed-looking Emperor that drove through the splendidly decorated thoroughfares; it was a beautiful, but a sad-faced, Consort who accompanied him; it was cheers all the way; but it was also a detective in plain clothes at one's elbow, more detectives in corners and doorways, still more detectives on roofs and—I dare say—up chimneys; it was festoons and illuminations and fireworks: but it was also bayonets and sabres; it was the democratic *Marseillaise* of France *and* the National Anthem of despotic Russia; it was "Long live the Emperor"; and "Long live the Republic"—but it was an ironical, a pitiable spectacle: this Imperial guest, come on a visit to a friendly country, protected and surrounded by an illimitable, armed bodyguard, as though he were entering—not Paris—but the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Numbers of Russian decorations for the Paris detective police, when the Tsar had departed in safety! Out of prison came the perfectly

innocent "revolutionaries": the Russian girls were permitted to resume their studies in the Latin Quarter . . . not the silliest little bomb had spluttered, not a seditious cry had been raised . . . and a high police official of my acquaintance was granted by a grateful Government a prolonged holiday on increased pay. He deserved it. Dark shadows under his eyes, hectic spots in his cheeks, dyspepsia, insomnia, acute neurasthenia: such was his plight after the glorious visit to Paris of the Tsar of All the Russias. To-day, eighteen years later, my detective friend has risen to one of the highest positions at the Sûreté, and he can produce many a decoration or gift awarded him by foreign Royalty, and is particularly proud of a gold watch presented to him by King Edward the Seventh. The late King was so popular in Paris that he was known familiarly and affectionately as "Edouard." Nevertheless, he was watched over by the private detective police. "*Mais oui*, we had even to attend to the safety of 'Edouard,' the most admirable of kings; he often gave me cigars, and you have already seen the gold watch," my detective friend recently told me. "We were concerned about the Indians in Paris. Oh, nobody else would have assailed Edouard. As for the Indians, they were kept under observation day and night." The detective was alluding to the notorious Krishnavarna, who "ran" a scurrilous little newspaper in a house off the Champs Élysées. Odd, sinister-looking Indians (I am still quoting

my police friend) called frequently at the place. They remained there for hours and hours : what were they doing ? But the police have their eye on them—especially closely and keenly fixed on them now that King George and Queen Mary are about to make their entrance into Paris. Also —so I am informed by the same high detective official—the police have been instructed to beware of the militant Suffragettes. Miss Christabel Pankhurst " under observation " ; the comings and goings of her visitors watched and recorded ; the lady passengers on the Havre, Dieppe and Calais steamers carefully scrutinised on their arrival ; the police actually taught to shout " Votes for Women " in order that they may promptly distinguish that cry in the event of its being uttered ! Dear Paris—dear, excitable, incoherent, wonderful, incomparable Paris—into what difficulties as well as delights, into what a whirl of pleasure and confusion, does a Royal visit plunge you !

But, never mind the difficulties, *tant pis* for the confusion ; *vivent* the more than compensating thrills of emotion and delight. This evening, as I close this paper, Paris is once again shouting: " Vive le Roi " and " Vive la Reine "—shouting herself " hoarse," so the French and English Press unanimously declare ; and the decorations and illuminations of the past have been triumphantly eclipsed, and the State banquets, the reception at the Hôtel de Ville, the gala performance at the Opera, the race-meeting and the military review

have surpassed in brilliancy and splendour even the golden ceremonies that solemnised the visit of the Tsar of All the Russias. Very remarkable, too, the State speeches delivered by the President of the Republic and the King of England in the banqueting-hall of the Élysée. Both speeches of unusual length : the old, banal, stilted phrases superseded by a note of eloquent and vigorous sincerity.

As a matter of fact, the reception of his son has excited even higher and livelier enthusiasm than did the official visit of King Edward the Seventh—because he *is* his son : because, since the year 1904, the *entente cordiale* has matured and strengthened. At all events, unprecedented things have happened. Until to-day, the French newspapers could scarcely contrive to publish an English word, or name, or sentence without misspelling, mangling or otherwise distorting it. Our Prime Minister used to be " Sir Askit," whilst our ex-Home Secretary, Mr " Winsy Churkil," was frequently and severally described as Chief of the Police and—Prefect of the Thames. Vanished, to-day, all those inexactitudes and incoherencies of recent times. Before me, almost surrounding me, spread and bulge a mass of French newspapers of all opinions. But every one of them has become " correct," impeccable in its English, and right across the top of the front page of *Gil Blas*, in gigantic characters, the familiar, cordial invitation :

" Shake hands, King George."

XV

AT THE ÉLYSÉE. MESSIEURS LES PRÉSIDENTS

1. M. Loubet and Paul Déroulède

On 16th February 1899, President Faure (known familiarly and gaily in Paris as "Félix") died suddenly. Two days later the Upper and Lower Chambers, solemnly assembled at Versailles, proclaimed M. Émile Loubet his successor. And now, after seven years in the Élysée, M. Loubet makes way for the eighth President of the Third French Republic and retires into a tranquil, simple *appartement*.

Seven years ago! But it seems only yesterday that I found myself, one cold, misty afternoon, before the St-Lazare station, where the newly elected President was to arrive. I was eager to witness his début in Paris as Chief of the State. Eager, too, to "receive him" were thousands of Parisians.

But as I surveyed the dense, excited crowd, I gathered at a glance that the reception it reserved for M. Loubet was to be very far from friendly. Here, there and everywhere chattered and whispered the followers of MM. Edouard Drumont, Lucien Millevoye, Henri Rochefort and Jules Guérin. In full force, too, were the paid hirelings of those notorious agitators; collarless, shabby,

unshaven fellows, "Messieurs les Quarante-Sous." And present again was the "Emperor of the Camelots," a striking-looking man with long hair, bold, brilliant eyes and a humorous expression; not only the composer and seller of "topical" songs, not only the indefatigable electioneering agent and the ironical pamphleteer, but the ingenious, the illustrious, the incomparable organiser of "popular demonstrations."

Often did agitators say to the "Emperor": "I want So-and-so hissed," or "I want So-and-so cheered." Obligingly and genially the "Emperor" replied: "Nothing is easier." And in truth, the operation was simple. The agitator provided the money: and the "Emperor" called together a fine army of manifestants.

Thus the crowd before the St-Lazare station looked threatening on that memorable winter's afternoon. Of course those garrulous, gesticulating bodies, the "Ligue de la Patrie Française" and M. Paul Déroulède's "League of the Patriots," were strongly represented. Inevitably, too, the little, nervous, impetuous policemen of Paris figured conspicuously in the scene. And everyone was restless, everyone was impatient, save the "Emperor of the Camelots," who, making his way urbanely and imperturbably through the crowd, occasionally spoke a word to his subjects, his army: the shabby, unshaven fellows, Messieurs les Quarante-Sous. No doubt he was asking them whether their voices were in good condition, and whether their whistles were handy. And

most probably he was instructing them how to keep out of the clutches of the alert, watchful police.

"À bas Loubet!"

The cry came from the interior of the station. No sooner had it been uttered than the crowd excitedly exclaimed: "He has arrived."

And then, what a din of shouting, of hissing, of hooting! And then, what a blowing of shrill, piercing whistles! And then, as the Presidential carriage drove away (with M. Loubet seated by the window, pale, grave, dignified, venerable), what a hoarse, violent uproar of "À bas Loubet!" and "Mort aux traîtres!" and "Panama! Panama! Panama!"[1] Not one hat raised to him. Not one cheer given him. Not one courtesy paid him. It was to the ear-splitting notes of whistles, it was to a chorus of calumny and abuse, it was in the midst of a howling, hostile mob, that the new Chief of the State made his début in Paris.

What, it may be asked, was the reason of M. Loubet's unpopularity? Well, the Dreyfus days had begun: those wild, frenzied days of feuds, duels and hatreds; of frauds, riots and conspiracies, when Parisians allowed themselves to be governed and blinded by their passions and prejudices. M. Loubet was notoriously in favour

[1] M. Loubet was Premier and Minister of the Interior at the time of the exposure of the Panama scandal. In November, 1892, he was forced to resign, but retained his post of Minister of the Interior under M. Ribot, the new Premier. Two months later, disgusted by the calumnies of their adversaries in the Chamber, both M. Loubet and his colleague M. de Freycinet Minister of War) retired.

of granting the unhappy prisoner on the Devil's Island a new trial. Paris, on the other hand, misled, intimidated, deceived by the Nationalists, was Anti-Dreyfusard. And hence the tempestuous reception—at once spontaneous and "organised"—accorded the new President on his return from Versailles.

However, in the present paper, it is not my intention to examine the political situation in France during the tumultuous winter, summer and autumn of 1899. My aim is to portray certain scenes and to record certain incidents which may convey an idea of the state of Paris in that epoch, and of her attitude towards M. Loubet. And here let me return without further ado to the crowd before the St-Lazare station, where, after the President's departure, there appeared yet another amazing agitator in the person of M. Déroulède.

He has been likened to—Don Quixote. And it has also been good-humouredly agreed that in his devoted lieutenant, M. Marcel Habert, he possesses an admirable Sancho Panza. For M. Déroulède is an *exalté*. M. Déroulède is extravagant, theatrical, often absurd: yet with a noble sincerity in him and an attachment to the idea. And as he stood in the thick of the St-Lazare crowd, with his official Deputy's sash, with his decoration in his button-hole, with fire in his eye, with a flush on his cheeks and with burning "patriotic" utterances on his lips—as he stood there haranguing and gesticulating, M. Paul Déroulède held everyone's

attention. At that moment, he was passionately inviting his hearers to follow him to Joan of Arc's statue, there to hold a "patriotic" demonstration. Often, he made such a pilgrimage. Often, too, he made pilgrimages to the Strasbourg monument on the Place de la Concorde: and to the cemeteries where rest the "heroic victims" of Germany. There were many who laughed at him, but his courage and honesty no one, not even his adversaries, doubted. He had fought valiantly in the Franco-Prussian War, and ever since that appalling campaign he had looked after the interests of the scrubby little soldier—*le pioupiou*—and composed songs and poems in his honour. "Vive l'Armée!" and "Vive la France!" were the eternal, emotional cries of M. Déroulède. At his bidding, Paris echoed those cries. And Paris also "supported" him enthusiastically when he made his pilgrimages to the Place de la Concorde, and the cemeteries, and Joan of Arc's statue; for in what is essential and fine in him, his noble sincerity and devotion to the idea, even when in the wrong, M. Déroulède stands as the outward and visible type of a quality that belongs to the soul and the genius of France.

Well, upon the present occasion, M. Déroulède's audience was particularly responsive. "Then follow me!" he shouted triumphantly. And so, behold him leading a long, animated procession from the St-Lazare station to the rue de Rivoli. And behold him again, a few minutes later, standing against the railing that encircles "La Pucelle"

astride of her horse. And behold his followers—hundreds of them—closely surrounding him, and the police—scores of them—ready to "charge" the crowd at the first outbreak of disorder. But M. Déroulède, unlike the Anti-Semitic Jules Guérin, was no lover of brawls. He wished only to "defend" the "honour of the Army" (which, by the way, had never been assailed). He desired only to point out that France was governed by a number of men who dreamt day and night, dreamt night and day, dreamt always and always of "selling their country to the enemy." Ah, these abominable, these infamous traitors! Even as he, Paul Déroulède, stood there, at the foot of Joan of Arc's statue, this sinister, this diabolical Government was plotting the "réhabilitation" of a man—no, a scoundrel—convicted by his own colleagues of treason.

"Citizens, our France, our beloved France, is in danger. Citizens, do your duty. Citizens, drive away the traitors who govern you. Citizens, show your execration of these traitors by crying with me: "Vive l'Armée!" "Vive la France!" "Vive la patrie!"

And again the crowd was responsive. This time, indeed, there were shouts of "Vive Déroulède!" Parisians came running up from neighbouring streets, so that the crowd grew and expanded. On the tops of the omnibuses passengers cheered encouragingly. At every window and on every doorstep stood spectators. In fine, much animation around Joan of Arc's statue.

"En avant!" cried, martially, our Don Quixote. Warned by the police to be "prudent," he replied that he was a "patriot," and hotly demanded that his Deputy's sash should be respected. Then, placing himself at the head of his followers, he led them triumphantly towards the *grands boulevards*. Again, "patriotic" cries. Again, fierce denunciations of the "Government of Traitors."

And, in M. Déroulède's organ, *Le Drapeau*, next morning, what an exultant account of M. Loubet's tempestuous début in Paris, and what a glowing recital of the "grandiose" and "glorious" manifestation held at the foot of Joan of Arc's gilded statue.

After this we had daily, almost hourly, manifestations. Very *affairé*, but always urbane and imperturbable, was the "Emperor of the Camelots." Very active and zealous were Messieurs les Quarante-Sous. And very garrulous, excited and nervous were the Parisians. In cafés they emotionally agreed that the situation was "grave." In cafés, also, they whispered of plots against the President and the Republic—sensational plots that greatly agitated the Chief of the Police. Yes, M. Lépine was alarmed; M. Lépine had lost his appetite; M. Lépine could not rest at night for thinking of the shoals and shoals of conspirators then present in Paris. A veritable plague of conspirators!

Here, there and everywhere, a conspirator. Who knew: perhaps one's very neighbour in

cafés, trains, omnibuses and trams was a dangerous conspirator? And so, when we spoke of conspirators and conspiracies, we lowered our voices and glanced apprehensively over our shoulders, and were altogether very uneasy, suspicious and mysterious. Heavens, what rumours! And mercy, what an effervescence! Now it was the "agents" of the Bonapartists who were "active." Anon it was the Orleanists who were "at work." Next it was the Clericals who were conspiring. And, finally, it was the Militarists, who had actually appointed the day and the hour when they would give a Dictator to France. Already it had been arranged that the Dictator should appear in Paris on a splendid black charger, surrounded by a brilliant, dashing staff. And the Dictator, from his saddle, was eloquently to address the populace. And when the Dictator spoke the sacred name "France," he was to draw and flourish his sword. And the brilliant staff was to cheer. And the dashing staff was to cry—— No matter: the approaching arrival in Paris of the Dictator and retinue was a secret; only whispered timidly and fearfully amongst us when we felt ourselves secure from conspiring eavesdroppers. Such was the gossip; such was the nervousness. Little wonder, then, that the Chief of the Police passed restless, unhappy nights. Never a moment's peace, never a moment's leisure for poor M. Lépine. All around him, conspirators. And before him, at the same time, the task of making preparations for

M. Félix Faure's funeral, which was to be solemn, imposing and magnificent.

And magnificent it was. Almost interminable was the procession that left the Élysée for Notre Dame, to the tragic strains of Chopin's *Funeral March*. All along the route, soldiers and policemen. And behind the soldiers and policemen, the people of Paris—men, women and even children—who murmured their admiration at the plumes, at the flowers and at the brilliant uniforms in the cortège. Each foreign Power was imposingly represented. But most imposing of them all were the Emperor William's envoys: three Prussian officers, veritable giants. Then, mourners from the French Army; mourners from the Chambers; mourners from the Corps Diplomatique; mourners from the Academy and Institute; mourners from every distinguished official, social and artistic sphere. And at the head of all these grand mourners the homely, plainly dressed figure of M. Émile Loubet.

However, one mourner was missing: a friend of the late M. Faure: none other than M. Paul Déroulède. And yet he had deeply deplored the death of the late President, and fiercely denounced the advent of his successor.

But—M. Déroulède was busy. Think: at that moment the Élysée had no master. So, what an opportunity. And as the funeral procession proceeded slowly and solemnly from Nôtre Dame to the cemetery, M. Déroulède might have been seen in a distant quarter of Paris

with his hand on the bridle of General Roget's horse.

"À l'Élysée, Général ; à l'Élysée."

Only think of it. There was General Roget with soldiers under his command, who would follow him wherever he led them. And the Élysée—practically—was empty. And thus it was the moment of moments to achieve a brilliant *coup d'état*.

"À l'Élysée, Général ; à l'Élysée."

But General Roget refused to turn his horse's head in the direction of the Élysée. He preferred to return to the barracks with his men, and therefore begged M. Déroulède to release his hold of the bridle.

Manqué, M. Déroulède's conspiracy. In vain, his tremendous *coup d'état*. Behold our Don Quixote and his devoted Sancho Panza, in dismay and despair. Behold them some time later on their trial for conspiracy. But behold them acquitted by the jury amidst a scene of the wildest enthusiasm. And hear the joyous, triumphant proclamations that their acquittal was yet another bitter humiliation for M. Loubet.

What insults and what calumnies followed! Every Nationalist organ began a fierce campaign against M. Loubet, accused him of corruption, of every conceivable meanness and crime, and exultantly related how his name was constantly being *conspué* in Paris. Since it was "seditious" to cry "À bas Loubet," they cried "Vive l'Armée!" and "Mort aux traîtres," which

M. Lucien Millevoye, Édouard Drumont, Henri Rochefort and Jules Guérin declared to be the same thing.

Those were the only cries that greeted M. Loubet when he drove out in the Presidential carriage—pale, grave, dignified, venerable. From his native place, the village of Montélimar, came a message imploring him to resign. More hissing and hooting in the streets, but always a calm smile on the President's kindly face ; always that determined, imperturbable expression.

Other " incidents " ? Well, for months there was incident after incident: and when Émile Loubet drove to the Longchamps Races surrounded by cavalry, it was stated that he feared assassination. At Longchamps up rushed an elegant young aristocrat with a stick in his hand, and the stick was aimed at the President's head. It only smashed the President's hat: but the Nationalists rejoiced. And the elegant young aristocrat was regarded as a hero, and caricaturists always portrayed Émile Loubet with his hat smashed over his head. Came another message from Montélimar, inviting him to accept the public verdict: but came, also, messages of sympathy and esteem from all the Courts in Europe.

And here, passing over other incidents, let me arrive at once at the day when the man in the street began to admire Émile Loubet's patience, tact, determination, and when he was delighted at the calm, kindly smile; and when—day of days—

he said: "Ce bon Loubet," and then—moment of moments—cried, "Vive Loubet." A change, a change! Through the streets drove the President, saluting, saluted. Parisians rejoiced to learn that the Tsar had a veritable affection for Émile Loubet, and Parisians were pleased to see him drive across Paris with the King of England, chatting, smiling, laughing. Cordial the shouts of "Vive Loubet." Cordial the newspaper appreciations of Émile Loubet. And the streets lined to see him take train to London.

In London, scores of journalists accompanying him, and also scores of *camelots*. Yes, real Paris *camelots* in Soho, and in the public-houses and little restaurants of Soho, the *camelots* loud in their praises of Émile Loubet.

Here, there and everywhere the motto: "Entente Cordiale."

I remember the King of the Camelots telling me in Soho that he and his men had taken a great fancy to Englishmen.

His appreciation was worth having, for he was no enthusiast. Indeed, he had done a great trade some time ago in Anti-English caricatures, toys and post cards. He drank to the *entente* in a bottle of Bass. He vowed that Bass was better than *bock*. He paid tributes to roast beef, apple tart and kippers; indeed, regretted with veritable emotion that there were no kippers in France. So kind and affable and flattering was the King of the Camelots that I could write of him for hours. However, I must leave him on the kerbstone in

Holborn, shouting: "Vive Loubet," and waving his hat and receiving (so, at least, he declared afterwards) a special salute from the smiling, delighted President.

Everyone charmed with Émile Loubet, and Émile Loubet charmed with everything. Of course, King and President held little private conversations; it is certain that Lord Lansdowne and M. Delcassé met often and talked long.

Then, Paris again—and crowds in the street once more to shout: "Vive Loubet." Heavens, what a change since the February afternoon four years ago! To-day, nothing but sympathy and esteem for the President, part author of the Anglo-French Agreement. To-day, nothing but sincere pleasure at the Agreement, which brings together two naturally friendly and sympathetic countries. "Perhaps the most important Treaty ever signed in time of peace," said an enthusiastic Parisian to me. And then, with equal enthusiasm: "Vive Loubet!"

2. M. Armand Fallières. Morocco and the Floods

A day or two ago, in the Presidential palace of the Élysée, M. Armand Fallières celebrated his seventy-second birthday. I do not know whether there were gifts, flowers, a birthday cake, champagne and speeches: but, according to an incorrigible gossip in a boulevard newspaper, M. le Président stated that this was the blithest birthday he had known for seven years. "I breathe

again," he is reported to have said. "This time next year, I shall pass my anniversary, not in a frock coat and varnished boots, but in a dressing-gown and carpet slippers."

I believe this is the "mood" that would obsess anyone who had passed seven years of his life as President of the French Republic. It was M. Émile Loubet's mood. Nothing in this world would have induced him to accept a second Septennat; and to-day M. Loubet lives in a quiet little flat on the Rive Gauche, where (in his slippers) he has often exclaimed: "Ce pauvre Fallières!" And then gone to bed tranquilly and comfortably; whilst his successor at the Élysée was in consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs over the miseries of Morocco. President Casimir-Périer endured just six months of Presidency. "On m'embête; je m'en vais," said he. He was too elegant to care for slippers. But a day or two after his resignation he was discovered stretched in an easy-chair in the garden of a Bois de Boulogne restaurant, in white duck trousers. "I breathe again," he stated—just as President Fallières has now declared on his seventy-second birthday.

Thus it would miraculously appear that one stops breathing upon being appointed President of the French Republic, and doesn't regain one's breath until one's martyrdom at the Élysée has expired. Certain it is that the President of the French Republic, living as he does in the most amazing city in the world, must experience and

endure amazing tribulations and adventures. President Loubet went through the Dreyfus Affair; President Fallières through the Floods. Up and down the Seine in a barge sailed M. Fallières, and because of his bulk and lest the barge might capsize, the boatmen had to implore M. le Président not to move. He was a heroic, but not a dignified, figure as he sat, massive and motionless, in that barge. Nor could he ever look other than bulky in the Presidential carriage (which, when he entered it, nearly tilted over) as he drove forth to meet foreign sovereigns, or to attend the great military review or gala performances at the Français and Opera. That vast bulk has always been against him. Not a Parisian that has not commented on it, not an illustrated newspaper that has not depicted it, not a theatrical revue that has not exaggerated it.

Although M. Armand Fallières has left Paris for his country residence at Rambouillet, the French "Presidential Holiday" has not yet begun. To start with, Rambouillet is a State château, almost another Élysée, in that Cabinet meetings are held there, the Ministers motoring down from Paris with their portfolios and wearing their official, inscrutable expressions. Outside in the park, flowers, birds, winding paths, shady trees, hidden, tranquil corners; but within the Council Chamber, the old, eternal complications and miseries of politics.

No doubt, when the Ministers have left, M. le Président seeks to lead the simple, the ordinary

life. But, as Rambouillet is a State residence, flunkeys abound, and not only gardeners, but detectives, haunt the park. Impossible, to put it vulgarly, to be "on one's own." Worse than that, how the majestic, powdered flunkeys wink and grin when M. Armand Fallières has turned his back upon them in his slippers, alpaca jacket and vast gardening hat! For M. le Président is burly, with a formidable *embonpoint*; and when he enters a carriage, it tilts; and when he steps into a rowing boat, it very nearly capsizes, and when——

"I am the most inelegant of Presidents," M. Armand Fallières himself has admitted. "Heavens, how my servants despise me!"

At Rambouillet M. Fallières' predecessor, most admirable M. Loubet, also aroused the disdain of the flunkeys by reason of his simplicity—and his real holiday did not begin until he had reached his native town of Montélimar, where he was treated—and liked to be treated—as *un enfant du pays*—a son of the soil. Because Montélimar is famous for its nougat, M. Loubet was dubbed by fierce, lurid old Henri Rochefort—"Nougat the First." But Republican France liked to hear of her President hobnobbing with the people of Montélimar and gossiping with the peasantry of neighbouring villages, and leading forth on his arm a little brown-faced and wrinkled old lady, in the dress and cap of a peasant woman —his mother.

But those are all memories. We have nothing

to do with Montélimar; we are only concerned with the wine-growing districts of Loupillon, where M. Fallières (released from official Rambouillet) will be amiable, pottering and peering about amidst his vineyards in a few days. Behold, just as last year, M. le Président, not only in slippers, but in his shirt-sleeves; and behold, too, the peasantry stretched over hedges and perched high up in trees, that they may view the burly Chief of the State inspecting and admiring his grapes. They are his hobby, his pride, his exquisite joy: and yet it is notorious that they are a very sour, a very inferior, one might almost say, a very terrible little grape.

Ask the Loupillon peasants and they will exclaim: "It is extraordinary, it is unheard-of that a Son of this Soil, and a President of the President, should produce such a grape! Look at it! *Cré nom d'un nom*, what a sad little thing!"

Ask those privileged, intimate friends who lunch *en famille* at the Élysée, and they will cry: "Ah, the white wine of Fallières! Ah, the Presidential grape from Loupillon! It makes one shudder to mention it."

But, M. le Président ignores these criticisms and mockeries. After Morocco and Proportional Representation, his dear little grapes! In spite of their smallness, their sourness, how he loves them!

Six weeks of his grapes—then the Élysée, Morocco, once again; and then, in February next, nothing but holidays for the Chief of

the State. For February will see the end of M. Fallières' seven years' Presidency, and, like his predecessor, he will not seek re-election. Like M. Loubet, too, his next Paris residence will be a comfortable, bourgeois third-floor *appartement*—its site, the Boulevard St Germain, within a few minutes' walk of M. Émile Loubet's flat in the rue Dante. No flunkeys, no detectives in plain clothes — and no telephone. Moreover, no pianolas, no gramophones, no parrots, no poodles, for M. Fallières (who owns the building of flats in which he has decided to reside) has warned his tenants that no such nuisance will be tolerated when he moves to his new quarters. The simple, the ordinary life! Morocco, etc., etc., etc.—only memories. Never ceremonious banquets, with Château Yquem, and Morton Rothschild, and Lafite, and the finest of Extra Secs. Modest luncheons and dinners *en famille.* And for wine, nothing but the sour, little white grape of Loupillon.

It has been said that the best rulers are those who feel an extreme disinclination to rule, and who only consent to accept authority under a strong sense of duty. If this be true, then unquestionably M. Émile Loubet and M. Armand Fallières were good and loyal presidents, who, without personal ambition and at the cost of their own tastes, as well as of their own interests, served the Republic—for seven years, each of them—to the very best of their knowledge and power. And upon this question of power one

has to keep in mind that M. le Président, though he holds the title of Chief of the State, is very much in the hands of his ministers. He forms ministries? Yes; but here, too, it is not always the most competent and disinterested men, in France particularly, who are most eager for office. Nothing can be more unjust than to make admirable M. Émile Loubet, excellent M. Armand Fallières, responsible for everything that happened, and especially for everything that went wrong, during the two periods of seven years these patriotic French citizens devoted to the service of their country.

The difficulties of M. le Président, the impertinent disregard of his rank in the State shown by the very men he has called to power, is a favourite theme of playwrights and novelists. In *L'Habit Vert*, the brilliant, satirical comedy by MM. de Flers and de Cavaillet, just produced at the Variétés theatre, a Cabinet Minister submits an important political telegram for the President's official approbation. "Yes, that will do; send it off immediately," says M. le Président. "That's all right; it was sent half-an-hour ago," replies the Minister. Then, in that famous comedy, *Le Roi*, which so rejoiced the heart of King Edward the Seventh, the French Premier to one of his colleagues: "Cormeau, the Minister of Commerce, has just resigned. Nearly a Ministerial Crisis, but we have escaped it. Telephone the name of Cormeau's successor, and that all is well, to the Press, the Chamber, the Senate, the Palace

of Justice, and—ah yes, I forgot—to the President of the Republic."

On the top of all this, M. le Président, although practically in the hands of Messieurs les Ministres, is held responsible by the public for the possible blunders and follies and sins of the Cabinet. Salary, £40,000 a year, with all kinds of substantial "perquisites." Residences: the Palace of the Élysée and the Château de Rambouillet. Ironical official title: Chief of the State. Result: Morocco, Floods, or the Dreyfus Affair, helplessness and worry, collapse of the respiratory organ. But, thank heaven! M. le Président recovereth his breath when the time comes for another to take his place: and he himself may drift into a dressing-gown and carpet slippers and exclaim of his successor, by the tranquil, unofficial fireside: "Ce pauvre——!" Successor at the Élyseé. Who will he be? Of course, after the lofty and admirable statesmanship he has exhibited throughout the Balkan conflict, M. Poincaré, the Prime Minister, is hailed by the man in the street as the future Chief of the State? But elegant M. Paul Deschanel, of the French Academy, President of the Chamber of Deputies, and a would-be President of the Republic for the last fourteen years, is also mentioned; and impetuous, despotic, sallow-faced M. Georges Clemenceau, in spite of his recent delirious ups and downs, has hosts of followers. Solid M. Ribot is stated to be an eager candidate. M. Léon Bourgeois (who did such fine work at The Hague

Peace Conference) would probably be elected, were there a Madame Bourgeois to " receive " officially at the Élysée. After that, M. Delcassé, M. Lépine, M. Briand, Madame Sarah Bernhardt, M. Dranem the comic singer, " Monte Carlo Wells." But I am anticipating events. I am also in peril of appearing incoherent; so let me hasten to declare that the last-named candidates for the Presidency of the Third Republic are but the gay " selections " of that inveterate gossip in a certain boulevard newspaper. And, that made clear, let us for the moment leave the emptiness of political ambition and share in the dressing-gown and carpet-slipper mood of M. Armand Fallières.

3. M. Raymond Poincaré and the Record of M. Lépine

Last February (1913) must be accounted an important month in the history of the Third French Republic. Away, after his seven years' official tenancy of the Élysée, went M. Armand Fallières to a comfortable bourgeois *appartement*, there, no doubt, to recall, in dressing-gown and carpet slippers, the rare joys and successes and the many shocks and miseries of his Septennat, and to speculate upon the destiny reserved for his successor, ninth President of the Republic, M. Raymond Poincaré.

No commonplace destiny—that was certain. M. Fallières took possession of the Élysée amidst general indifference; M. Émile Loubet assumed

office amongst eggs, threats, vegetable stalks, shouts of "traitor" and "bandit": but M. Poincaré found Paris *en fête*—flags flying, hats and handkerchiefs whirling, the crowd in its Sunday best—on the day that *he* became Chief of the State.

A vast popularity, M. Poincaré's! Exclaimed M. le Bourgeois: "At last we have got a strong man for a President! For the first time, there will be a master at the Élysée." On all sides, indeed, it was agreed that M. Poincaré's election to the Presidency signified the collapse of the tradition that the Chief of the State should be a figure-head, a mere signer of documents, placed, none too ceremoniously, before him by his Ministers.

Thus, a new régime had dawned. Poincaré was "going to wake things up"; Poincaré was also "going to do things"; what precisely Poincaré was going to do nobody could explain; but "Vive Poincaré," was the cry of the hour; and not only in luxurious, radiant Paris, but in grim, industrial centres, dull, provincial towns, and remote, obscure hamlets. Such a popularity that into the shop windows came Poincaré Pipes, Poincaré Braces, Poincaré Walking Sticks, the Poincaré Safety Razor. Then, on restaurant menus: Consommé Poincaré—Poulet Poincaré—Omelette Poincaré. More Poincaré, smiling and bowing, on dizzy kinematograph films and in the music hall revues; and imagine, if you can, the sale of Poincaré photographs in the flashy arcade

of the rue de Rivoli! "Poincaré and Gaby Deslys—that's what we are selling," the shopkeepers stated. "But Poincaré is surpassing the blonde, elegant Gaby."

In a word, nothing but Poincaré, only Poincaré, until the announcement that M. Lépine, Chief of the Paris Police, had tendered his resignation, that his decision to retire was "irrevocable." Then M. Lépine leading in the photographic commerce of the rue de Rivoli: and M. Poincaré a poor second, and the blonde Mademoiselle Deslys a remote third. Elsewhere and everywhere, M. Lépine and his resignation superseded M. Poincaré and the New Régime, as the one and only topic of conversation. For twenty years the Chief of the Police had governed his own departments of Paris with extraordinary skill. Throughout that period he had practically lived in the streets: repressing riots, scattering criminals, dispersing Royalist conspirators, controlling fires, directing all manner of grim or poignant or delirious operations—a short, slender, insignificant-looking figure, in ill-fitting clothes, a dusty "bowler" hat, and square, creaking boots. With him, a shabby umbrella or a stout, common walking-stick, the latter the only weapon he ever carried. Never more than four or five hours' sleep: even then the telephone placed at his bedside.

It was all work with M. Lépine—all energy, all courage. The most familiar figure in the streets, he soon became the most famous and most popular

of State servants. Cried M. le Bourgeois, whilst out walking with his small son: "*Voila—regarde bien—voila* Lépine!"

Everyone "saluted" him, all political parties (except the United Socialists, who admire no one) applauded him. There was (with the same solitary exception) general rejoicing when the dusty, intrepid little Chief of the Police received the supreme distinction of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour.

Yes; a popularity even vaster than M. Poincaré's. Gossips remarked that it was curious that the Presidency of the one should synchronise with the resignation of the other. Critics agreed that if France had gained a strong Chief of the State she had lost an incomparable Chief of the Police. Alarm of M. le Bourgeois, who had got to regard M. Lépine as his special protector. Once again, and for the hundredth time, M. Lépine became the hero of the hour. And, as I have already recorded, there was a rush for Lépine photographs—Lépine side and full face, Lépine gay or severe, Lépine with Grand Cross or shabby umbrella, and a decided "slump" in Poincarés and blonde, bejewelled Gaby Deslys' in the rue de Rivoli arcade.

Impossible, in the space at my disposal, to give more than an idea of M. Lépine's amazing record. Born at Lyons in 1846, he is now sixty-seven years of age—a mere nothing for a Frenchman of genius. At thirty he was already Under-Prefect of the Department of the Indre. Successively

he was Prefect of the Seine-et-Oise, General Secretary of the Préfecture de Police, Governor-General of Algeria, and Chief of the Police. From a biographical dictionary that devotes pages and pages to Louis Lépine, I take the following passages :—
"Actif et ferme, il parvint à rétablir les relations rompues entre le Conseil Municipal de Paris et la Préfecture de Police, et opéra d'importantes réformes. . . . Nommé Gouverneur-Général de l'Algérie, il apporta en plan de grands travaux publics et de réformes. . . . Nommé Conseiller d'État, il prit de nouveau la direction de la Préfecture de Police. Il s'est occupé de refondre tous les règlements administratifs relatifs au service de la navigation et de la circulation dans Paris, et un vaste Répertoire de Police a paru sous sa direction." Thus it will be seen that M. Lépine was always "reforming," for ever reorganising, unfailingly "active" and "firm." He it was who "reformed" the nervous, excitable Paris police in the delirious Dreyfus days of 1899. To their astonishment he preached calm.

"Mais oui, mais oui, mais oui, du calme, nom d'un nom," he expostulated. "You charge the crowd for no reason. You thump the innocent bourgeois on the back and tear off his collar. You exasperate the Latin Quarter. You are making an inferno of the boulevards. You are bringing ridicule and discredit on the force. In future, I myself shall direct operations."

Dreyfus riots every day and every night, and M. Lépine in the thick of them. Short and

slender, he was swept about and almost submerged by the Anti-Dreyfus mob. He lost his hat, his umbrella, but never his temper. He was to be seen swarming up lamp-posts, that he might discover the extent of the crowd and whether reinforcements of agitators were coming up side streets, and from which particular windows stones, bottles and lighted fusees were being hurled. His orders he issued by prearranged gesticulations. Not only the police, but the Municipal and Republican Guards, had been taught to understand the significance of his signals. A wave of the arm, and it meant "charge." But it was only in desperate extremities that M. Lépine sent the crowd flying, battered and wounded. Pressure was his policy; six or seven rows of policemen advancing slowly yet heavily upon the manifestants, truncheon in hand and the formidable horses and shining helmets of the Republican Guard in the rear. When, upon a particularly tumultuous occasion, the "pressure" was resisted, and a number of boulevard kiosks were blazing and heads, too, were on fire, M. Lépine implored assistance—from Above.

"Send me rain," he begged audibly of the heavens, "send me torrents of rain." And the heavens responded, so people affirmed. A few minutes later the heavens sent M. Lépine thunder, lightning and a deluge that reduced the blazing kiosks to hissing, sodden ruins; cleared the frantic boulevards; allowed police, soldiers and even M. Lépine to go to bed. But, on the other

hand, caused Jules Guérin and his fellow outlaws and conspirators against the Republic to exult wildly and grotesquely on the roof of Fort Chabrol. For Guérin was short of water. The supply had been cut off and Guérin's only salvation was surrender or rain. And it rained, and it poured and it thundered. The heavens were equally kind to Rebel, and Chief of the Police. Up there on the roof of conspiring Fort Chabrol assembled Guérin and his companions with baths, buckets and basins; with jugs, glasses and mugs; all of which speedily overflowed with the rain. Down there in the street, the soldiers in occupation of the besieged thoroughfare stared upwards, open-mouthed, at the amazing spectacle on the roof—Guérin and Company joining hands and dancing with glee amidst their multitudinous rain-catching vessels; Guérin bending perilously over the parapet and roaring forth between the explosions of thunder and the flashes of lightning: "We have got enough water for months. Tell Lépine we defy him." Another jig from Guérin et Cie. Guérin once again at the edge of the parapet, mockingly drinking the health of the soldiers below, and then emptying baths full of water into the street and bellowing: "Voilà de l'eau," and performing such delirious, dangerous antics that it was deemed necessary to telephone an account of the scene to the Chief of the Police. "Let him dance his jigs all night in the rain; it will cool him," replied M. Lépine. "Je le connais: he is too clever to fall over the parapet."

Nor did Guérin capsize. Nor yet did M. Lépine put an end to the jigs on the roof—to the rest of the Fort Chabrol farce—until Paris had been appeased by the Rennes Court Martial verdict, and the acutest stage of the Anti-Dreyfusard agitation died out amidst exclamations of: "C'est fini! Quelle sacrée affaire! Quel cauchemar! Enfin, n'en parlons plus."

After the lurid autumn of 1899 came a particularly bleak, cheerless winter. So bitter was the weather that fond mothers kept their children indoors, and thus Edouard and Yvonne yawned with boredom in their nurseries, and quarrelled, and exchanged blows, and gave way to tears.

"Toys are not what they used to be," complained a mother to M. Lépine. "They are stupid or vulgar, and children get tired of them."

This set M. Lépine thinking. Like all Frenchmen, a lover of children, the Chief of the Police realised that the arrival of winter was a grief and a blow to Edouard and Yvonne. If they couldn't rejoice in the open, they must be enabled to rejoice in their homes; and the way of rejoicing at home is with toys. But toys, so said that mother, had deteriorated: and this grave state of affairs M. Lépine resolved to investigate. Behold him, therefore, gazing critically—officially—into the windows of toy-shops, and hear him declaring, as the result of his inspections, that the toys, truly enough, were old-fashioned, and vapid, and banal —poor things to play with in the nursery after

the Guignol and roundabouts of the Luxembourg Gardens, and the other delights and surprises to be enjoyed in summer *en plein air*. Thus "reforms" were imperative.

In a long, official circular M. Lépine informed the toy manufacturers of Paris that, with the consent of the Government and with the approval of the President of the Republic, an annual Toy Exhibition was to be held, and that prizes and diplomas would be awarded to those manufacturers who displayed the greatest originality in their work. However, not ungainly, ugly originality. "Pas de golliwogs." Messieurs les Apaches also prohibited; and a stern, official reprimand to the toy-maker in whose window M. Lépine had discovered a miniature guillotine.

"Des choses aimables, gaies, pratiques, douces, humaines, humoristiques."

Toys to amuse and also to quicken Edouard and Yvonne's imagination and intellect. Well, the Paris toy-makers responded brilliantly. The first exhibition was an overwhelming success, and to-day it has become a State Institution. Not only is there the "Prize of the President of the Republic," but M. le Président himself visits the show. Then prizes from the Presidents of the Chamber and Senate, prizes from every Cabinet Minister, prizes from the Judges of the Paris Law Courts, and more prizes from scientists, men of letters, the leading newspapers, the *haute bourgeoisie*, the *grand monde*. Thus, what an inducement for the toy manufacturers to do their

utmost! This winter's Exhibition I missed, but a letter from a French father of five informed me that it had "surpassed" itself. Continued my friend: "Des choses épatantes, merveilleuses, inouïes! I confess, *mon vieux*, that I go there all by myself; yes, without my five children." Thus M. le Bourgeois (to which excellent category of society my friend belongs) goes to the Lépine Exhibition "on his own." Surely only a Frenchman could find pleasure in that? And surely only a French Chief of the Police—fancy suggesting such a thing to Scotland Yard!—could, in the midst of his grim, poignant or delirious duties, evince so charming and tender a consideration for children as to realise that it is a question of interest to public order that children shall have toys "original" enough to marvel at and rejoice over, during the bleak months of winter. But, inevitably, as in all admirable works, in all excellent reforms, there are drawbacks; and in this particular case they are obvious. For instance, a whole "set" of the First Act of *Chantecler*: innumerable chicks and chickens, the Blackbird in his cage, the dog Patou in his kennel, proud, majestic Chantecler on the hedge of the farm-yard, the radiant Hen Pheasant, the lurid-eyed Night Birds, trees, haystacks, a pump . . . price 300 francs.

"Papa, do please buy me all this, immediately," demands Yvonne tremulously, passionately, her eyes shining, her cheeks aflame.

"Papa, I want all this," shouts Edouard,

pointing to a vast array of soldiers, cannon, ambulances, aeroplanes and air-ships engaged in military manœuvres. Price 420 francs.

"But you have only five francs each to spend. For the love of heaven, be reasonable. Ah, *nom d'un nom*, all the world is looking and laughing at us," cries the unfortunate father.

Scowls and sulkiness from Edouard; tears and shrill hysterics from Yvonne. When informed of these tragic scenes, M. Lépine exclaims: "Poor little dears! But what can I do? Impossible to buy a whole farm-yard or an army with a piece of five francs."

After toys, let me take pictures—the incomparable Monna Lisa, who, when She vanished, disturbed even the proverbial calm of M. Lépine. All France sent him "clues." Every post brought him shoals of letters that strangely and severally denounced a Woman in a Shawl, Three Men in Blue Aprons, a Man with a Sack, a Negro with a Diamong Ring, a Turk in a Fez, and a Man Dressed as a Woman, as Monna Lisa's base abductor. In each case these singular beings were said to have been seen carrying an object of the exact dimensions of the stolen picture. Also, their demeanour "was excited," their "hands trembled" as they clutched the precious masterpiece, and they jumped into a passing cab or hurled themselves into a train just as it was steaming out of the station. "Believe me, M. le Préfet," concluded M. Lépine's incoherent informants, "believe me, I have given you an exact

description of the culprit." Then, letters of abuse, threatening letters, letters from practical jokers, letters demanding interviews—all of which had (under French law) to be considered and classified. Again, telegram upon telegram, and the telephone bell always ringing.

"If I cannot speak to M. Lépine himself, I won't speak to anyone. And then the picture will be lost for ever," stated a voice through the telephone.

"Well, what is it ?" demanded M. Lépine, at last coming to the machine.

"*Ecoutez-moi bien*, M. le Préfet. My name is Charles Henri Durand. I am forty-seven years of age. I am a papermaker by profession. And I live on the third floor of No. 16 rue de Rome," related the voice through the telephone.

"After that, after that! Quickly! *Au galop!*" cried M. Lépine.

"Monsieur le Préfet, my information is grave and I must not be hurried," continued the voice. "At the very hour of the theft of the picture I was passing the Louvre. Suddenly, a man jostled me. He was carrying what was undoubtedly a picture in a sack. He hastened down a side street, casting suspicious glances about him. He was a Man with a Squint and——"

"Ah, zut," cried the Chief of the Police, hanging up the receiver.

And on the top of all this incoherency, light-headedness. Always and always, when Paris is shaken by a sensational *affaire*, some light-headed

soul loses what remains of his reason. On to the Place de la Concorde came a pale-faced, wild-eyed man, with a chair. After mounting the chair, he folded his arms across his chest and broke out into a fixed, ghastly grin. As he stood motionless on his chair, always grinning, a crowd inevitably assembled, and M. Lépine appeared.

"What are you doing there?" demanded the latter.

"Hush! I am Monna Lisa," replied the Man with the Grin.

"Then at last we have found you!" exclaimed the Chief of the Police. "All France has been mourning your loss. Come with me quickly. You must return immediately to the Louvre."

"Yes, yes," assented the light-headed one, descending from his chair and confidently passing his arm under the arm of M. Lépine. "Take me home to the Louvre."

A wonderful spectacle, the Man with the Grin disappearing on the arm of the Chief of the Police, relating, as he went, that he had escaped from his frame in the Louvre in the dead of the night.

A wonderful spectacle was M. Lépine a few nights later, when "directing operations" at a disastrous fire on the Boulevard Sebastopol. In the sight of the crowd he struggled into oil-skins, and next was to be seen stationing the engines, dragging about hose, pushing forward ladders, signalling and shouting forth encouragement and patience to the occupants of the blazing house. On this, as on all similar occasions,

M. Lépine was blackened and singed when at last the fire had been mastered. But never have I beheld him so blackened, so dishevelled and battered, so courageous and capable as when he came to the rescue of the " victims " of the devastating Paris floods. Up and down the swollen, lurid river he careered in a shabby old boat. At once-pleasant river-side places, such as Boulogne and Surèsnes, he was to be found chest-deep in the turbid, yellow-green water—always signalling, always " firmly " and " actively " " directing operations." He climbed into the upper windows of tottering, flooded houses ; briskly made his way across narrow plank bridges ; distributed here, there and everywhere blankets, medicaments, provisions—the mud and slime of the river caked hard on his oilskins. As he passed by in his boat, the most bedraggled figure in Paris, loud cries of " Vive Lépine " from the bridges and quays ; and, indeed, wherever he went, M. le Préfet de Police excited respect and admiration. I see him, in top hat and frock coat, " receiving " the late King Edward VII. in the draughty Northern Station. I see him pointing out the beauties of Paris to the present Prince of Wales. I see him surrounded by the turbulent students of the Latin Quarter, whither he has been summoned to check their demonstrations against some unpopular professor. I see him examining (in the interests of the public) the clocks of motor cabs, the cushions of railway carriages, the seating conditions in theatres, th-

very benches and penny chairs in the Bois de Boulogne. Finally, I see him as he is to-day; no longer Chief of the Police, but a private "citizen," established in a spacious, comfortable *appartement*, which, to the admiration and excitement of naïve, bourgeois Parisians, is equipped with no fewer than two bathrooms.

"With two bathrooms our admirable Lépine will have plenty to do," states M. le Bourgeois. "They are a responsibility, as well as a pleasure; but, of course, they will not prove too much for a man like Lépine." Then up speaks a primitive soul: "One is free to bathe and free not to bathe. But to have two bathrooms is scandalous: and I should not have thought it of Lépine."

However, in the opinion of a third critic, M. Lépine should be permitted to have ninety-nine bathrooms if he likes. Twenty-two years Chief of the Police, he is now entitled to do as he pleases. So leave his two bathrooms alone.

"When a man has retired, he must have distractions with which to occupy his mind and his leisure."

But if, as reported, M. Lépine loves his pair of bathrooms, he loves the streets better. As in his official days, behold him here, there and everywhere. A brawl or a fire, and there he is. Now in an omnibus, next in the underground railway, up at Montmartre, down on the boulevards, amidst exclamations of "Voilà Lépine!" and the salutes of the police. Only a private "citizen," but he is still addressed as "M. le

Préfet." Merely the master of a comfortable *appartement*, of a couple of bathrooms—but is that enough for a Frenchman of action and genius? Gossips predict that M. Lépine will next be seen in the Chamber of Deputies, or that he will help M. Georges Clemenceau to wake up the Senate —the "Palais du Sommeil." For my own part I fancy that, should a crisis arrive, the ex-Chief of the Police will be requested to "direct operations" again.

"There is a telephone in my new home," M. Lépine is reported to have said. "If the Government should want me back, it has only to ring me up."

XVI

MADAME LA PRÉSIDENTE, M. GEORGES CLEMENCEAU AND THE UNFORTUNATE M. PAMS

THERE is an important reason for the popularity of M. le Président: there is Madame la Présidente.

Less than a month ago Madame Raymond Poincaré, wife of the President of the French Republic, was the hostess, in Paris, of King George and Queen Mary; to-day, as I write, she is helping to entertain, with almost similar brilliancy, their Majesties Christian and Alexandrine of Denmark. In the interval between these two Royal visits, Madame Poincaré has spent a few days on the Riviera, but it wasn't a holiday. Madame la Présidente was accompanied to the south of France by the most punctilious, the most rigid, the most terrible of all tutors—a high official of the French Protocol. And instead of enjoying the drowsy charms or the worldly delights of the Riviera, it was Madame Poincaré's duty to master a few elegant phrases from the difficult Danish language; to acquaint herself with the brightest episodes in Danish history; to discern the subtleties and intricacies of Danish etiquette; and incidentally (and always under the respectful

but intense eye of the high Protocol official) to discover which kinds of flowers grow in Denmark; what the climate is like; at what hours the Danes rise and retire; and whether they are particularly fond of music, literature, the drama, pictures, sculpture, dancing, needlework, and so on, and so forth.

Although an extremely clever and accomplished woman, it is probable that Madame Poincaré experienced hardships and even miseries in "getting up" her Denmark: for it is a country—and a language—that does not easily accommodate itself to an emergency. (You, reader, could *you* gossip, here and now, glibly and elegantly, even in your own language, about Danish national characteristics?) Moreover, it must be remembered that, when she left for the Riviera to acquaint herself with Denmark, Madame Poincaré had only recently finished "getting up" her England: the latter, of course, a less arduous, but nevertheless a strenuous, task. Two languages, two countries; two Kings and two Queens; banquets, gala opera performances, military reviews, special race-meetings, drives in State carriages across Paris, ceremonious greetings and adieux at the gaily decorated Royal railway station — decorations, illuminations, soldiers and soldiers, the National Anthems of England, Denmark and France—all this brilliancy, and excitement, and hard labour in the short space of one month! Such, nevertheless, has been the duty of Madame Raymond Poincaré as hostess

of the Presidential Palace of the Élysée: and yet even here in England, and even there in Denmark, one hears scarcely a word about the personality or the functions of Madame la Présidente!

. . . .

An ungrateful, even an ironical position, that of a French President's wife. She is the hostess of foreign Royalty: but never, in her turn, their guest. The rigid French Protocol forbids, for some reason or other, that Madame la Présidente shall accompany her husband on his State visits abroad. She may drive through the streets of Paris by the side of Queen Mary: but she must not drive, officially, through the streets of London, or Copenhagen, or St Petersburg. In a word, Madame la Présidente must suffer all the anxieties and responsibilities of the arduous, proud position of hostess to Royalty: and is left behind in Paris when her husband goes away on visits of State to receive almost Royal honours. Yes: an ungrateful, an ironical position, that of Madame la Présidente. Particularly so, when one remembers that, upon social occasions at all events, she is almost invariably more tactful, *sympathique* and ornamental than M. le Président.

Well, the French Chief of the State goes almost royally abroad. In his own country, when he opens exhibitions or "inaugurates" monuments and statues and *lycées* at Lyons and Marseilles, he is very nearly a king—and Madame la Présidente stays at home. She "counts" only in

Paris ; her powers are confined within the walls of the Élysée, where she is for ever dispensing all kinds of hospitalities—hospitalities that demand infinite skill and tact. For instance, one of those dinners upon other occasions—" eminent " Academicians, leading barristers, men of letters, and clericals, and anti-clericals, and militarists, and pacifists, and ambiguities, enigmas, and " dark horses " (so far as their political opinions are concerned)—many of whom are the bitterest of enemies, and all of whom Madame la Présidente has " placed " around the dinner-table, with such incomparable tact and discretion that not a guest can see more than the nose or the chin of his particular foe. Also, Madame la Présidente has often reconciled enemies—to the advantage of M. le Président—whose own endeavours to obtain the same reconciliation have proved vain. Furthermore, it is on record that, during an acute Cabinet crisis, Madame la Présidente stopped one of France's leading statesmen, as he flung out of the Élysée, by grasping his arm and putting a rose in his button-hole, and the Cabinet Minister, exclaiming : " Ah, madame, vous êtes exquise ! " allowed himself to be led by Madame la Présidente back to the Council Chamber.

. . . .

Has Madame la Présidente been once again working miracles ? What is this we hear in the month of June, 1913 ? A reconciliation, an alliance, even, between M. Raymond Poincaré and M. Georges Clemenceau.

When, in February last, M. Raymond Poincaré was elected President of the French Republic, Parisians exclaimed excitedly, with one voice: "This means the end of Clemenceau. He is dying; he is dead; he is already buried." For it will be remembered that M. Georges Clemenceau, the "Smasher of Cabinets," also "The Tiger," had savagely attacked M. Poincaré's candidature; had even called upon him to withdraw in favour of an obscure Minister of Agriculture, in business life a maker of cigarette papers, of the unfortunate name of Pams. Cried M. Clemenceau here, there and everywhere: "I vote for Pams." In the lobbies of the two Chambers he ordered his followers to "vote solidly for Pams." The "Tiger" had sent M. Loubet to the Élysée; he would do the same for his dear Pams. The manufacturer of cigarette papers was a true democrat—M. Poincaré was a despot. Pams, indeed, had all the virtues; Pams at the Élysée would raise the prestige of the Republic, but heaven help the poor Republic if M. Poincaré were elected.

So fierce was the "Tiger's" antagonism that, on the very day of the Presidential election, and in the Palace of Versailles, M. Poincaré appointed "seconds" to demand an explanation from M. Clemenceau. The affair was "arranged." But up to the last moment the "Tiger" canvassed and canvassed for M. Pams in the lobbies of the Versailles palace. And he was sallower than ever; he did not attempt to conceal his anger

and indignation when M. Poincaré was proclaimed Chief of the State by a handsome majority. Said a Deputy: "Versailles has been Clemenceau's Waterloo. In Poincaré he met his Wellington." But the "Tiger" wasn't tamed. A few weeks later he "smashed" the Briand Cabinet. Then he started a paper—*L'Homme Libre*—and therein, as in the lobbies of the two Chambers, he renewed his attacks upon the new President. So has Paris been amazed, staggered, almost petrified to read in the newspapers the following official announcement:

"Sur le désir que le président de la République lui en avait fait exprimer par son secrétaire général civil, M. Clemenceau s'est rendu aujourd'hui à l'Élysée, pour conférer avec M. Poincaré." Or: "At the desire of the President of the Republic, expressed through his principal private secretary, M. Clemenceau has called at the Élysée and conferred with M. Poincaré."

Mortal enemies—nearly a duel—three months ago: but now is M. Clemenceau invited most politely to call at the Élysée, where he remains shut up with President Poincaré for a whole hour! Never such gesticulations on the boulevards, such excitement in the French Press. "Even the weather has been *bouleversé* by the interview at the Élysée," writes a Paris journalist. "M. Clemenceau's visit to M. Poincaré is undoubtedly responsible for the sudden heat wave." Asks another journalist, somewhat cruelly: "What does M. Pams think of it? Also, where is

M. Pams ? We have sought for M. Pams at both his Paris and country residences, but in vain. No news of M. Pams either at the cigarette paper manufactory. We are becoming uneasy about M. Pams." And declares a third journalist: "Versailles is forgotten and forgiven. Behold the President and Clemenceau hand-in-hand. But it is the triumph of the 'Tiger.'"

And so, most indisputably, it is. It was M. Poincaré who "desired" the famous interview, and this was made clear (at M. Clemenceau's request) in the official communication to the Press. Why did he "desire" it ? What induced M. Poincaré to forget all about M. Clemenceau, M. Pams and Versailles ? The truth is, M. Poincaré has need of the "Tiger's" support, not only in the Chambers, but in his new paper. It is also a fact that, in spite of the Pams episode, M. Clemenceau is far and away the most powerful journalist and politician in France. If M. Clemenceau doesn't agree with you, he "smashes." "He assassinates you in the Chamber and then buries you in his newspaper," once said a Deputy. To come to the point: the President of the French Republic, disturbed by the hostility to the Three Years Army Service Bill, sees in the "Tiger" the only statesman powerful enough to cope successfully with the situation. In other words, the next French Premier will be M. Georges Clemenceau.

And, according to many a reliable French politician, the fall of M. Barthou, the actual Prime Minister, is near. A kindly, admirable man,

M. Barthou: but no "leader." I remember him, as Minister of the Interior, attending the funeral of the victims of the Courrières mining catastrophe —eleven hundred lives lost. Tears ran down his face; he was literally a wreck, pale, red-eyed, almost inarticulate, when the special train took him back to Paris. Six weeks later, during the subsequent strike, down to Courrières came M. Georges Clemenceau, the new Minister of the Interior. Not a trace of emotion about the "Tiger" as he visited the stricken mining villages. He spoke sharply to the strikers. He promised that, if order were preserved, the troops would be withdrawn. Next day three—precisely three—windows of an engineer's house were broken. Then trainful after trainful of troops, until there were ten soldiers to every striker—and that broke the strike.

A man of iron, M. Clemenceau—when in power. No pen so eloquent, so stirring as his in French journalism, and his pen he has now taken up in favour of M. Poincaré and the new Army Service Bill. Throbbing, thrilling phrases, as always. Here is a passage of his appeal to the French Army: "Athens, Rome, the greatest things of the past were swept off the face of the earth on the day that the sentinels hesitated as you are beginning to do. And you—your France, your Paris, your village, your field, your road, your stream—all that tumult of history out of which you come, since it is the work of your forerunners —is all this nothing to you?"

All this may be very sound, very lofty, very noble. But all this, by arrangement with President Poincaré, will lead to the next Premiership. And all this leaves me unhappy, for the reason that I can't help thinking and worrying about M. Pams.

What is the "Tiger," the future Premier, going to do for him?

There's a cynical, sinister rumour on the boulevards that M. Clemenceau has shrugged his shoulders and said: "Don't speak to me about Pams. I've had enough of him. Let him go on making cigarette papers." So things stand at the Élysée on the 2nd of June 1913.

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